UNEDITED REALTIME FILE

# National Federation of the Blind

# “DeafBlind Division Meeting”

## June 7, 2023

## 8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. ET

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CARLA: When we get started, Shelia, I'm assuming you're on, yeah? Maybe not?

>> Carla, this is Kat. Shelia is on.

CARLA: It's nice to see.

(Screen reader)

CARLA: So someone has their JAWS on, and it's kind of loud. Thank you. Okay, it is 8:00 Eastern, but I would like to give just about two more minutes to make sure we have everybody here. This is Carla McQuillan from Oregon. And Shelia, you're here right?

SHELIA: Yes, I am. Can you hear me?

CARLA: Yep. Yes, we can.

FRANK: Hello, Carla. This is Frank.

CARLA: Hey, how's it going?

FRANK: Good. Hot and smoky, but I'm doing okay. You?

CARLA: Hot and smoky, yeah, where are you?

FRANK: Idaho, next door.

CARLA: Oh, yeah. Well, actually, I'm in Minnesota right now, so I'm not next door. (Laughs)

ROCKY: What are you doing in Minnesota?

CARLA: I'm working with the folks at Blind Incorporated. They're starting air buddy program next week so I'm doing some training for the staff, and we are doing kind of a program evaluation and just a bunch of stuff.

So yeah, we're -- we've been here this week and I say we, my husband Lucas is here, too. He's doing some training.

ROCKY: I'm from Minnesota, and part of the --

CARLA: The cool thing -- on our way out, we got to spend Sunday with our daughter in Denver. It was her 40th birthday.

ROCKY: Oh, nice.

CARLA: That was cool. We don't get to see her very often. She's a workaholic and she's in Denver, so it was kind of nice.

Okay. So if everybody thinks it's all right and people can come in as they get here, President Riccobono had asked that Shelia Wright and I help with the reorganization of this division, and so a couple of goals tonight.

We are wanting to adopt a new constitution when the division meets at the national convention in Houston, and the requirements for that are that we have to read it at least once prior to reading it again when we actually vote on it.

We're here tonight to make sure that everybody got the -- first of all, did anyone not receive a copy of the proposed constitution that Shelia sent out a couple of weeks ago?

>> TISHA: I didn't. I'm Tisha Lisles in California, and I was invited to come to the meeting by Maurice.

CARLA: Okay. So I'm going to guess, Maurice, you got this. You're on, aren't you?

MAURICE: Yes, I actually do have a copy.

CARLA: Perfect.

MAURICE: I'm assuming that you're going to read it, but if you're not going to read it, I can certainly send it to Tisha. Worst case, I'll see her at the chapter meeting.

CARLA: I don't think it would hurt. Reading is one thing, but having the copy to review I think would be a good thing.

KAT: This is Kat. It was not posted to the national division listserv?

CARLA: No, wait -- oh, oh, you know what? Okay I didn't realize, in some of the confusion I sent out an invitation for a 7:00 p.m. Eastern meeting that went out on the listserv, but I realized that Shelia was not on that listserv and did not know that it went out.

She sent out a second invitation and that's the one I went with, but you are correct. She has now been added. I asked Beth Braun to add her to the list.

KAT: The only reason I saw the constitution is because I was sent it discreetly and I'm not going to not lie to you guys. I've seen it, yes, but as far as that, it was not posted publicly.

SARA: This is Sara Coleman. I also did not receive a copy of the constitution proposed.

DALE: I did not receive a copy.

MARK: Mark Harris did not receive one.

RACQUEL: I did not receive one.

CARLA: Are you all on the listserv? Is there anyone who is not? That will be need to be sent separately.

>> Mark, I can send you one.

>> Okay thanks.

CARLA: And Shelia, like I said, you should be on the listserv now so if you want to pop that in and send it out, it's the NFB DeafBlind -- DB, right?

JEFF: Shelia, can you send that to me as well please?

SHELIA: Who was that?

JEFF: Mr. Giffen.

>> And this is Donald, can I get a copy?

SHELIA: You run the meeting, I'll send copies.

CARLA: If it's possible, I would like for you to read it, Shelia or at least grab yours because I'm not prepared for that. I don't know if you saw my e-mail that I sent a little while ago or not.

RACQUEL: My name is Racquel and I don't think I'm on the listserv. The only way I know there's a meeting today is because of Robert.

CARLA: What we are going to want to do when we're at the end of the meeting, we should have a list of participants, she says confidently, knowing nothing that technical about Zoom. One of those things I never claimed to be was technical.

But if we have the list, I think we can add all of your names to the listserv.

KAT: That aren't already on.

CARLA: Right, who are not already on the listserv, yes.

KAT: Can you give a reference to David Andrews? Sorry, I need to get off my ex-affiliate president hat and stop talking. Sorry.

CARLA: That's okay! So we can clarify who needs this and it -- well, we'll talk about putting all of these people on the list and figure out how that's best done, but we have a couple of real important issues tonight.

We need to read through the constitution. I need to talk about how you can pay your dues even if you're not going to be at the national convention because I just got confirmation on that process, and we also want to talk about what President Riccobono said we needed to do if there were people who were interested in running for -- (Audio frozen)

KAT: Oh, dear.

>> Carla, you keep breaking up.

KAT: We didn't hear some of that.

CARLA: That's because the internet is not great where I am. Let me see if I can move to a place where it might be better. Okay.

Is this better? Guys?

KAT: Clarity-wise yes.

CARLA: Okay good. So I'm at Blind Incorporated and the Wi-Fi is not fabulous here. So I have moved to a place where there is an access point, so let me know if I start breaking up again.

So what didn't you catch or where did I break up?

>> Mark Riccobono.

CARLA: Right. So President Riccobono, I talked with him yesterday about the procedures if someone is not going -- (Audio frozen)

KAT: Oh, dear. She totally cut out.

CARLA: That we have to be present and voting at a meeting of the organization at the national convention, but there is a way for us to kind of circumvent that and I want to talk about that later, but I think the first thing, unless anybody has additional questions, would be to go ahead and take a read on the constitution that we're proposing, and then we'll go through the other things and if anyone has questions, we have our interpreter for an hour, maximum 90 minutes, so I hope we can get through all of this.

The constitution really isn't very long, as Constitution go.

KAT: Yeah. It's really simple and cut and dry.

CARLA: Shelia, is that something that you can read or at least put on your screen reader to read to the rest of the crowd here?

SHELIA: Let me see. I'm not sure how to share a document. I've never done that.

CARLA: Well, I don't think you need to share it.

SHELIA: I'll try reading it.

Okay.

It's constitution of the DeafBlind division of the National Federation of the Blind.

KAT: And Shelia, this is Kat. Robert can correct me if I'm wrong, DeafBlind, shouldn't that be capitalized Deaf hyphen blind?

SHELIA: Is there a hyphen in there?

KAT: I believe so, I thought so.

[Overlapping Speakers]

SHELIA: When you write DeafBlind, the dictionary says it has no capitals, and it's written together.

KAT: I thought the division fought to have it hyphenated because it's a combined --

>> The division fought to take the hyphen out.

>> That's what I remember, they fought to take out the hyphen.

CARLA: So what do we want? Because we should be able to --

SHELIA: I thought we wanted capital Deaf capital Blind all together.

KAT: I've always capitalized it.

>> Capitalized the D and the B.

CARLA: I agree with the capitalization absolutely.

SHELIA: And it reads better and we always capitalize Braille so I think it should be what we want it to be.

>> That's fine.

CARLA: No hyphen is okay, capital D, capital B.

KAT: My apologies, I thought for some reason there was a hyphen in between.

>> This is Sara Coleman. I would like to make a suggestion. I think we should read the entire document, and then we can decide the best way to go through to make comments because I still don't have a copy of it, and if we're going to do these little -- these important changes, but I think we need to get the nature of the document.

CARLA: Okay so -- before we move on and I agree that that's probably the best process.

Before we move on, though, one of the purposes for doing two readings is after the first reading, you can still make revisions on the document, and then read the final version.

So what we have down can be revised and altered even if it's not at this meeting, we can do that through e-mail once everybody has the document in their hand, as long as the final version is ready at convention for the second reading and the vote. Does that make sense?

>> Yes, that does, I agree with that.

CARLA: Shelia, go ahead and read through it, and if you have questions or comments, make notes, and we'll address that at the end.

SHELIA: Okay. I just -- it has the adopted and the date and I just put in July 3rd since that will be the date of the meeting.

CARLA: Yep, that will be.

SHELIA: Article 1, name. The name of this organization shall be the DeafBlind division of the National Federation of the Blind.

Article 2, purpose. The purpose of this division shall be to serve as the division of the -- I'm not good at this.

CARLA: You know what? Shelia, what you can do, I don't know if you realize this, if you just go into your mail, your e-mail, you can open that document and you're still going to be in Zoom, and it will read the document for you with your voice or JAWS.

KAT: Correct.

SHELIA: Okay. Just go into e-mail?

CARLA: Yeah. You can get out of here --

SHELIA: I have the document pulled up.

CARLA: Okay well, yeah, go ahead, there's a way for you to get, the screen reader or JAWS.

>> The purpose of this organization is to serve as a division of the National Federation of the Blind --

SHELIA: Is that working?

CARLA: Yeah, it's a little fuzzy at the beginning, but it got better so start it again and let's see how it sounds.

>> The purpose of this organization is to serve as the division of the --

CARLA: Pull the microphone a little bit away from the --

>> For collective action by --

CARLA: Better --

>> (Muffled, inaudible)

CARLA: Stop it a minute. Can everybody hear it? It is a little fuzzy.

>> Yes, it is.

>> I got the gist of it.

>> I couldn't hear it.

ERIK: No, I can't really here it.

>> What did you say you can hear?

>> I'm in a meeting.

SHELIA: Let me see if my husband will just read it to us.

CARLA: Okay, fantastic.

KAT: Sighted people to the rescue.

CARLA: I can talk about the dues while she's getting her husband.

So okay. Bridgett Burke has set up, she just e-mailed me like ten minutes ago. She has set up the ability to pay dues on the website for the NFB website under divisions.

You scroll down to the DeafBlind division, and it's $5 a year and they will allow you to pay your dues online. And they will take that until the 30th of June and they will send a list to us where who is and has paid their dues, and then, of course, people will have the opportunity to pay dues at convention, as well.

KAT: Can you pay online, even though you're going to be at the convention?

CARLA: You can, absolutely.

KAT: I just like to go paperless when I can.

CARLA: Absolutely. But paying at the convention is an option for those who will be there. Okay. Shelia? Not yet. And the other thing -- I don't want to probably start into that if he's going to be here soon.

But yes, you can pay online, and now let me just throw this out because it's my memory that this was one of the divisions that was interested in hearing about the treasury of the division being managed by the national organization.

We don't have to make that decision here. We can certainly do it at the national convention meeting, but just to throw it out there for thoughts, okay?

>> Question about dues. If we pay dues now, then going forward, dues would be due by December 31st, correct?

CARLA: Well, yeah, January 1st. Yeah, it's an annual calendar year, yes on dues.

SHELIA: Okay.

CARLA: We're close.

>> She's turning off the JAWS for me.

CARLA: Oh, nice.

>> Well, there's too many distractions sometimes. Everybody knows that.

SHELIA: All right, I'm almost there.

CATHY: This is Cathy Miller, I thought she was doing a fabulous job reading it. So I'm glad that she's going to do that.

>> Hello, there, my name is Jeff.

CARLA: Hi, Jeff.

JEFF: I am Mr. Wright. I'm the quiet one in the family. Okay.

Beginning at the top, constitution. DeafBlind division of the National Federation of the Blind.

Adopted July 3rd, 2023.

Article 1, name: The name of this organization shall be the DeafBlind division of the National Federation of the Blind.

Article 2, purpose: The purpose of this organization is to serve as the division of the National Federation of the Blind, to be a vehicle for collective action by the DeafBlind of the nation, to function as a mechanism through which DeafBlind and interested persons can come together to plan and carry out programs to improve the quality of life for those who are DeafBlind, to promote the vocational, cultural, and social advancement of the DeafBlind; to achieve the integration of the DeafBlind into the Federation as a whole and into society; on the basis of equality, to focus attention upon the problems faced by the nation's DeafBlind, and to take any other action which will improve the overall condition and standard of living of the DeafBlind.

Article 3, membership. Section 1, the members of this organization shall be DeafBlind and others interested in promoting the purpose of this organization. The members of this organization are members of the National Federation of the Blind and shall have the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as the other members of the National Federation of the Blind.

Section 2, this organization shall be made up primarily of DeafBlind people and it shall be controlled by the DeafBlind. A majority of its voting members must be DeafBlind.

Section 3, any member may be expelled for violation of this constitution, for violation of the policies of the National Federation of the Blind, or for conduct unbecoming to a member of the Federation by a majority vote of the active members present and voting at any regular business session of this organization, or by two thirds vote of the board of directors.

The national convention of this organization may reinstate any person who has been expelled. Any person who feels that they have been unjustly expelled from this organization may appeal to the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind, which may, at its discretion, consider the matter and make a binding decision.

Unless the decision to suspend or expel is reversed by the national convention, or by the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind, the ruling of suspension or expulsion shall continue in effect.

Section 4, the name National Federation of the Blind, federation of the blind, or any variant there-of is the property of the National Federation of the Blind and if this organization ceases to be part of the National Federation of the Blind for whatever reason, it shall forfeit the right to use the name National Federation of the Blind, Federation of the Blind and any variant thereof.

Article 4, officers and board of directors. There shall be elected at regular annual meeting during each odd-numbered year a president, a first vice president, a second vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

The terms of these officers shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected and qualified. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the active members who are present and voting.

There shall be no proxy voting. If nominee receives a majority vote of the first ballot, the name of the person receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped from the list of nominees, and a second ballot shall be taken.

This procedure shall continue until one of the nominees has received a majority vote from the active members present and voting.

The duties of each officer shall be those ordinarily associated with that office. The president and the vice president must be DeafBlind.

Article... Okay. The next article that's written is the board of directors. The board of directors of this organization shall consist of five constitutional officers and four additional members of whom shall be elected a two-year term at the annual meeting during even-numbered years. All board directors shall be elected in the same manner as that described for the election of officers.

Okay. Article 5 then, which is meetings. Section 1. This organization shall hold its annual meeting at the time and place of the national convention of the National Federation of the Blind. The board of directors shall conduct the business of the organization between annual meetings.

Section 2 of article 5. The president of this organization may call a special meeting of the body at any time the president or most of the board of directors deems such action to be necessary. At such special meetings and at least 15 members must be present to constitute a quorum to conduct business and notice must have been sent to each member and to the members of the board of directors at least ten days prior to the date of the meeting.

Article 6, committees. The president may appoint such committees as the president deems necessary. The president shall be ex officio a member of all committees.

Article 7, dues. The dues for members of this organization shall be $5 per year. The membership year is the calendar year. Dues are payable in advance of, or by before December 31st.

No person may vote who is delinquent in the payment of his or her dues. The dues expire on December 31st of each year. Each member who wishes to vote must have paid dues for the current year by the close of registration at the annual meeting. Article 8. Funds and financing.

The funds of this organization shall be deposited in a bank to be selected by the treasurer with the approval of the president. All financial obligations of this organization shall be discharged by check or electronic transaction issued on order of the president and signed or approved by the treasurer.

Article 9, dissolution. In the event of the dissolution of this organization or for whatever reason, it ceases to be part of the National Federation of the Blind, its assets shall be transferred to the treasury of the National Federation of the Blind.

Article 10, amendments. This constitution may be amended by the regular meeting of this organizations by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the active members present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing in advance to the membership and provided it is in compliance with the provisions of the division's charter of affiliation received from the National Federation of the Blind and with the policies of the National Federation of the Blind.

So amendments to this constitution that are not reviewed, accepted and archived by the board of the National Federation of the Blind will not be considered approved policy of the division in accordance with the charter of affiliation.

Amendments shall be forwarded for approval and reviewed in a timely fashion.

Article 11, code of conduct. The DeafBlind Division shall abide by the National Federation of the Blind code of conduct. All individuals within the organization, including the attendees at the NFB-sponsored events, are expected to refrain from unwelcome and harmful misconduct outlined in the code, including, but not limited to: Discrimination, abuse, misuse of power, sexual misconduct, conflict of interest, fraud, and other forms of misconduct.

Lastly, there's the official pledge of the National Federation of the Blind that states as follows: I pledge to participate actively in the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its constitution, period.

CARLA: Thank you, Jeff. That was great. Much clearer. Okay. So the only thing that I would suggest, there is a place and I believe it is in the dues section, I could be wrong, that states his or her, can we change that to "their" so we are not -- our pronouns are appropriate? Does anybody have a problem with that?

KAT: Carla, this is Kat. I'm in agreement with you.

CARLA: Okay. It just struck me on the reading. So let's change that. Are there immediately any other revisions that someone feels they need to make?

FRANK: Frank. I have two. One is about the section where it's making payments, paying bills, being accepted by the treasurer. That should read I think by the treasurer's and the board's approval.

Number two, if I'm right, I might have read wrong, the code of conduct is not worded that's actually as a code of conduct of the National Federation of the Blind. That should be I think identical.

CARLA: Okay. This was just a reference that the full code of conduct, which we did not want to put in this constitution because it exists elsewhere. It was just referencing, so everyone understands. We're not going to put the full code of conduct in because as a member of the National Federation of the Blind, you have a responsibility to meet the criteria of the code anyway.

So we didn't see -- we did not see the point in adding the entire thing to the constitution because nobody wants to listen to that. That's like a 30-minute reading all by itself.

TISHA: It should be understood already since you're an NFB member.

CARLA: Let me address your other question, Frank. It has been traditional in this organization at every level that the president authorizes the payment of whatever, you know, financial responsibilities of the -- in this case, the division, the president authorize and the treasurer executes in whatever fashion, electronic or by check, that is requested by the president.

Is there a reason why you believe the whole board needs to vote on certain things?

FRANK: Well, I believe -- I mean, we do this at the State of Idaho board.

CARLA: Are you --

FRANK: Even in a couple of other programs I've been in, the board has to make the -- well, the president makes the final say, but the board has to approve it.

CARLA: Okay. So you're talking about just like if the board agrees that you're going to do a fundraiser, and you're going to purchase stuff or I'm trying to think what a division likely would have as expenditures, there are some very routine expenditures that it seems to me to be pretty tedious to try to get a board vote on every expenditure that has to happen.

KAT: Absolutely.

CARLA: Which is why we've removed that from most of the constitutions. If it's in your constitution, that's a very old constitution that you're working with in Idaho.

MAURICE: This is Maurice.

FRANK: -- we did rewrite it seven years ago. I think that should be that way because there wouldn't be any board saying hey, this was done without my knowledge, because that's what the board is there for, to help the president make the right decisions.

CARLA: Okay, Maurice?

MAURICE: Let me give you a brief thing. I think frank, what Carla is trying to tell you is that most boards do it that way, and that's actually what we've done in the past and Doula can correct me if I'm wrong.

But anything major, we have always discussed it and made certain all the board was on board, if it's something really big. But if it's just writing a check to pay for something, no, the normal procedure is followed.

If that helps clarify things.

CARLA: Thank you, Maurice. I think the reason that most constitutions have it written this way is not to tie the hands of the Division when they have financial obligations that the board ultimately is going to know about or knows about in advance, but a vote for every expenditure that is made sounds to me to be a very difficult thing to do and very time consuming.

And I'm just not sure that that's a route we want to go. And if the majority disagrees, then we can change it.

TRACIE: This is Tracie. May I have the floor? I'm the former first vice president of the division and during my time as first vice president, if there was major expenditures that needed to happen, the board would discuss those, but the smaller things, as long as we were transparent and the treasury reported, it's not such a big deal for getting the whole board together to take care of that business.

I think as long as we continue to be transparent in the treasury report, it should not be a problem for the smaller things, just to make sure that the larger items are always discussed and agreed upon by the board of directors.

CARLA: Okay so here's a proposal and we don't need to put this in, but you could say, anything under a particular dollar amount. I'm not a proponent of this because I think it does tie the hands of the organization, but if it would make the majority feel better, we could say, for example, an expenditure of over $1,000, let's say.

KAT: This is Kat. I would feel better if that's a policy. That should not go in the constitution.

CARLA: That is a really good point.

KAT: And I'm sorry, if I'm putting my ex-affiliate president hat on.

CARLA: I think you're right.

KAT: That should be a policy.

CARLA: Once you put it in the constitution -- so Frank, if this would make you feel better, once it's in the constitution, it's not easy to change. So if we leave it as is, Kat's right. You can vote on a policy of the organization. We could do it at national convention. If you want to say up -- let's say $1,000 -- is approved by the president, signed by the treasurer, and anything over that requires a vote of the board.

We certainly can put that in policy and vote on it.

But if it's in the constitution, it's not easy to change.

KAT: Policies can always be changed at any time with the majority of the --

CARLA: But not the constitution.

KAT: Exactly.

>> I agree.

TRACIE: I agree.

CARLA: So it sounds like Frank I'm asking you because you were the one who raised the issue. Are you okay with writing a policy?

>> Did we lose him?

(No response)

CARLA: Okay. So Frank, if you wanted to say anything more, apparently you're muted. But I think the sense of the group here at least is --

SHELIA: He is muted.

CARLA: That we adopt the constitution as read with the one correction, and then we can develop and vote on policies once we get to the national convention.

FRANK: That's what I'm saying. I guess it didn't go through right. It would be better to amend it later.

CARLA: A policy written, not amended, because the constitution should stay as it is which you can still write a policy to further restrict. Exactly. Okay. Are there any other -- what? Who was that?

CATHY: Cathy. Yes. I agree with keeping the policy as is, I am keeping the constitution as it is, with the addition of a policy later. I have one thought, a correction on several places within the reading, I heard the phrase "national federation for the blind" and unless that's changed, I suggest that we should change to "of the blind."

CARLA: I think you may have misheard. I didn't hear any "for." Did anybody else?

KAT: I think I did once and it may have been a misreading. I think it's more of a misreading.

CARLA: I think it's all "of" in the written language.

CATHY: Well, I'm kind of Deaf so I heard it incorrectly.

>> You're in the right club.

CATHY: Thank you.

>> Thank you for the input.

CARLA: Are there any other comments regarding the constitution before we move on? Who was that? Rocky.

ROCKY: Article 4 reads that the president and the vice president of the DeafBlind Division must be DeafBlind, but there's nothing in the constitution, nothing in that reading that said all of the officers must be DeafBlind, all of the officers and board members, which is a requirement for the national organization, that all members of the national board must be blind.

And I'm wondering if anyone here thinks that to be consistent with the national organization, if it wouldn't make sense for us to require that all of our officers, at least our officers if not the majority of our board members are DeafBlind and not just the president and vice president.

[Overlapping Speakers]

CARLA: Before you do, let me say something because I might be able to solve this.

First of all, I was a little surprised Rocky, I'm glad you raised it, that typically the constitutions read the president and the first and second vice presidents have to be DeafBlind. However, frequently in affiliates, I know we have had -- not currently -- we have had a sighted treasurer, sometimes, we had a sighted secretary. I think it would be limiting your options if you said all of the executive board.

And I don't think there is a constitution that says that. I think it's president, first and second.

So I am willing and happy to amend that because that was something I caught as well and it might be because -- hang on, Donald. Some of the organizations do not even have a second vice president. The larger the division, you add that in, but a lot of them don't.

Okay, Donald.

DONALD: A lot of constitutions say over half the board must be blind and in this case, DeafBlind. But yeah, I have not seen where the entire board must be blind.

CARLA: Or the executive board, all of them, yes. So if we amend it to say -- here's the deal. You got the president, you've got the vice president, the second vice president, so those are the three in line for the throne, right? So those are the ones that you want to make sure are DeafBlind, but secretary-treasurer, and then you would have a majority of the executive board.

I wouldn't have a problem if you guys are with me to add in the second vice president and part of that requirement and also to state that a majority of the board must be DeafBlind. Then I think you have more flexibility, but you're still going to encompass the majority of the ruling body is DeafBlind. Is that good for everybody?

>> I agree.

SHELIA: I'll fix that if everybody wants that.

KAT: I agree.

CARLA: Is anybody in opposition to what I just proposed?

SARA: I'm speaking in opposition only because I actually -- I'm assuming I do not know, I'm assuming part of this reorganization and new constitution is because of reorganization which typically indicates that we are -- (inaudible).

CARLA: Is she hard for you guys to hear?

SARA: I'm sorry, that was my fault. Totally my fault. This is Sara Coleman and I'm speaking in opposition to this idea because -- and I'm making assumptions that part of the reorganization of the division is due to the fact that we're probably pretty small, and that perhaps it's been difficult to gain leadership over these past years, as part of the reorganization. And I am concerned, if that is the case, that narrowing the opportunities for people who support the DeafBlind in the division are not given space for that. That being said, I do agree that the president, vice president, and anyone in presidential line of leadership should be DeafBlind. I think -- as far as the rest of the board, perhaps, three quarters of the board, half of the board -- I just want to keep that flexibility.

CARLA: And what I proposed was not two thirds, it was a majority. So if you've already got the three presidents et al. and you've got a total board of nine people, you're talking about two other people who need to be DeafBlind is all. I don't think that's going to stretch the organization.

>> I have been in the division for a very long time, and have served in leadership as well as various positions and I have seen the effect of what has happened when we have had non-DeafBlind individuals on the board to occupy spaces like treasurer and stuff, because it wasn't written in the constitution.

And I think it sends a mixed message to the membership that here, we have had seminars where we are trying to empower those who are DeafBlind, Deaf, and those who are losing their hearing and vision, how are we to do that when we don't have all the board members with various levels of hearing and vision loss?

That's all I want to say.

CARLA: Okay and I'm not going to argue that this organization needs to be run by the DeafBlind. And I think this article addresses that. And what are the odds -- if a majority has to be DeafBlind, that's at least five of the nine. I'm just going to go out there and say it's probably more likely that you're going to have eight of the nine at least, because that's just kind of the way.

But I would hate to limit, and you find a really bang-up secretary or treasurer, those are not easy jobs to hold. I would not want to limit that just to DeafBlind people because you may find yourself in a position where you don't have somebody really qualified to do the job you want them to do.

It doesn't mean they can control the board. If five of the nine are DeafBlind, then people who aren't cannot control the board. And they can't control the vote. Does that make sense?

MAURICE: We've never had a problem. I've heard what everyone has said, I can tell you it hasn't been a problem in the past that I've seen and I was elected in 2019. I'm going to agree with Carla McQuillan here. I think this is a discussion. It's a solution in search of a problem. Leave it alone, but the time --

CARLA: He's right, I think so.

>> I think we need to move on soon, too.

CARLA: And I'm with you on that, too.

So it appears that that is something that most people agree with. Are there any other comments about the constitution itself? If there is not, and if somebody has something, I will give some time at the end, as well, if we have it, but the other thing that I wanted to discuss was President Riccobono's suggestion, there were several e-mails that I received and Shelia received regarding people's concerns that they're not going to be able to attend the national convention because of health reasons, was the primary one I saw, or other reasons, and that they still wanted to be considered for leadership in the organization.

So because we're reorganizing, everybody is going to be reelected, the five executive board and the four board members. The five executive board members will be elected for two-year terms and because the board members are elected for two-year terms in even years, this election this summer, those four board members would be elected for one-year terms, and then in 24, there would be another election for the four board members. Does everybody get that?

>> Yes.

CARLA: Perfect. Okay. So what President Riccobono suggested, because the policy has typically been those members present and voting and although it's not clearly stated in the constitution, it is implied that if you are going to be nominated for the board for a vote, you need to be president. So what President Riccobono suggested was that if you are not going to be present, and if the membership is in agreement at the convention, in the meeting, we can vote to suspend the requirement for the nominees to the board being present in the room.

However, you will want to line up in advance, if you want to be considered for a board position and you are not going to be attending the convention for whatever reason, you will need to get someone in advance to plan to nominate you and quite frankly, I would say you know, I campaigned to everybody I could that you would be the one elected to the position that you would like to serve on this board. Is that making sense to you? Is everybody in agreement with that procedure?

KAT: Carla, I'm tossing this out here just to make sure I'm hearing you correctly.

CARLA: Is that Kat? Go ahead.

KAT: It's been a long day. And so what you're saying, I think, is for those that are not going to be present, if they want to run, they need to let someone know that they're interested in running so that person who's going to be in person can nominate them?

CARLA: Correct.

KAT: Just making sure I heard you correct. It was a three-step process you mentioned.

CARLA: That is correct.

>> This is Robert. Before that, though, if I'm understanding you as well, a motion would need to be made in the meeting that we want to suspend the idea that you have to be present?

CARLA: Correct. There would be need to be a vote at the actual meeting to suspend that requirement. This is what President Riccobono said, and then if the members present and voting agree to do that, then any names that are brought forward and please, you guys, don't just throw out a name of somebody who's not there without talking to them first.

Get their approval first, and then people who cannot attend, like I know Doula cannot attend, that her name could be put in and considered then for an office. Or a board position.

Is that clear with everybody? Perfect. Okay. Is there anything else that we need to talk about before we conclude? Someone, yes.

RACQUEL: I just have a question. Is the division meeting going to be in person or is there an opportunity for people to participate via Zoom?

CARLA: Here's the problem. I don't know, okay. The national organization is not paying for streaming or internet, any internet in the division rooms, and it is not going to be cheap. I do not know how much. Does anybody know what the fee would be for the internet in the room?

MAURICE: I'm one of the people that sent you an e-mail about this. I looked into it. It's $500 in the meeting room for any type of internet. That is why President Riccobono made that suggestion I'm thinking because the cost is quite prohibitive.

CARLA: It is. You couldn't be on Zoom and vote. It would be a stream I'm thinking. We could do Zoom so you could interact, but you can't vote virtually. That is still the policy.

JANICE: So because for medical reasons, I cannot attend, would I then have to ask like I think Robert who I knew previously was going, would have to -- if I understand, to keep my at least board position, I would have to ask to suspend the vote and have someone put my name up for this year?

CARLA: Okay. The motion to suspend the vote has to be the people in the room so you would need to get someone to nominate you and this is going to be a motion we're going to put on the floor at the very beginning of the meeting I promise you.

>> I'll do it if it's not done.

CARLA: Exactly.

JANICE: So my question is I would still have to be voted for one year and then have to hold another election next year when I can come to national next year when they have the full two years?

CARLA: I mean, if you can come, yes.

JANICE: I certainly hope so.

>> Carla, this is Robert. So a question about the streaming.

So we in California are planning to have our caucus if we ever find out when it's going to be on Zoom, and so we're not planning -- none of us are planning to buy a five hubs plan for internet. There's a couple of us on the board that are going to use our phone with the data plan to be able to just put it near the speaker and put it into Zoom and people be able to hear it.

I'm going to do it with the DeafBlind --

CARLA: I don't see why not. If you believe that that will work. If that's a plan, I am all for it. In fact --

>> That is a plan, but I don't know if it will work. We just don't know yet.

CARLA: One of the things that I'm thinking is if you have an external speaker, that you can plug directly into an iPad or iPhone or whatever that can have its own, then your external speaker is going to clarify the entire presentation to a much greater extent than just having a phone in the room.

But if you get a nice external speaker microphone, then yes, that would work.

>> I have it and I will be bringing it if someone wants to set up a Zoom, I'm happy to do it.

CARLA: And we certainly can talk about that. We certainly can.

If there's nothing else specific to procedural stuff, I just wanted to briefly go through what President Riccobono and I talked about in terms of the agenda.

Obviously, the constitution is critical, and I anticipate there will be additional discussion, but anyway, the elections are certainly essential, and then what we thought should be a really great idea because this division is in my opinion very vital to this division and one of the reasons Shelia and I said, yes, we would like to help reorganize this division is that we believe it would be very helpful to do some strategic planning, to break into groups, and do some specific okay you know, whatever the strategic -- here are our goals, here's what we want to do and then break people into groups of interest, I want to work on this, I want to work on this, talk about what this division can do on a broader scale and not just meet every year at convention, but do more, more outreach to affiliates.

We have the room from 1:00 until 5:00. If we don't use it that long, we don't have to, but I wanted to make sure that we had enough time that we could really cover everything that we thought was important, because it's this move forward that I'm hoping is going to revitalize this division.

CATHY: Cathy Miller. I like that. I like that a lot. We're talking about breaking folks out into a room and that brings to mind the way we plan for communication. Way back in the days of Jill Nulty, we used to have communication facilitators. We had interpreters. We had everything required and everybody could communicate with everybody else in that group. We need to get somebody in charge of communication who knows how we did that and to execute it. I don't care how much it costs, I'll pay for it. We need to make sure that communication is not a problem.

CARLA: I appreciate the comment, and my understanding and I will verify this with President Riccobono, but it is my understanding that the national organization has every intent of providing those exact types of services and we would just need to get an idea of how many groups we were going to have so we had sufficient captioning, interpretation, whatever it is that people need, signing, that that is part of the project here, and I think that is the intent of national.

They're paying for captioning tonight. We're not. You guys aren't. That was something we lined up through the national organization and the people that they have used in the past.

KAT: Have them thank them on my behalf.

CARLA: Maurice.

MAURICE: From what has happened in past years, when we do these small groups, typically the interpreters that have come to the meeting with us pitch in and help facilitate.

CARLA: Good point.

MAURICE: In person, for the in-person portion of this. So don't anyone worry about communicating in the room.

CARLA: Great thank you. Maurice, you and I should connect and talk more about that, but we don't need to do that tonight.

MAURICE: No.

CARLA: But as long as we've got it covered. I want to let you know Cathy, we're on it. Anything else before we go?

STUART: May I speak? This is Stuart. I wanted to say that I like the listserv kind of thing that we have going on with the organization and communicating with other DeafBlind through that medium, but for like the in-person meetings, I'm not really sure what I'm going to be able to help possibly do something like that because it's been a few years since I've been able to be in person really with anybody.

And my in-person skills are really not well developed anyway. So I'm working on that, but I don't know how to communicate well in person right now. I have a little bit of tactile and I don't always have the same speaking capabilities going, and my hand doesn't work really well to do ASL or TASL so I kind of got one that I can manage some tactile, but for, you know, the voting or the representation, I didn't understand from the transcript if there's any kind of a system or that if you don't vote if you're not there, you don't have someone there to represent.

Is that what I'm understanding?

CARLA: If you are not going to be able to attend, you are going to need someone who is going to be in the room to nominate someone for an office or the board. You will want someone to make a motion that you believe is important, so yes, you are correct in understanding that, and did I answer your question? That was what you were asking, right?

STUART: Not just for proposing but also for voting?

CARLA: You can't vote remotely. The only votes are in the room. That's what the constitution from 1940 has always said in this organization. We suspended it for two years during COVID, and the national board voted that that was no longer an exception to the constitution since 1940, so you cannot vote remotely.

You can get someone else in the room to nominate and to raise a motion, but you cannot vote.

STUART: So the new constitution is the same way?

CARLA: Constitution is exactly the same as the constitution that has been -- present and voting has been the criteria for 83 years.

>> And I don't know any constitution that's any different.

CARLA: Across the country.

KAT: Carla this is Kat. I'm just wondering for those DeafBlind individuals like myself who use speech as their primary language, and I'm not asking you to answer this question now because you may have to go back to your colleagues and figure out --

CARLA: My people!

KAT: I find myself a lot in scenarios when I'm with my DeafBlind friends and I'm like wait what's going on? Who's saying what? Because I don't need an ASL interpreter. I need a voice interpreter keeping me on the sidelines.

>> I understand what she's saying, a lot of times I'm the same way.

CARLA: Okay and think that is all going to be taken care of.

CATHY: This is Cathy. Yes and to that question, I urge you to -- when you register, you probably already registered for the convention, but if you've already registered, you might want to call the organization and revise your registration if you need to, but there is a part that asks about accommodations that you might need. It will be critical that you describe exactly what you need.

KAT: I did see that, but again, I didn't know -- if they would provide that. It's not your traditional interpreter.

CARLA: Look I will check into that for you, Kat, and I will put that answer out on the listserv.

KAT: It's just for that meeting.

CARLA: Okay. Anything else?

FRANK: Frank.

CARLA: Yep, Frank.

FRANK: I was wondering, maybe we need a request for people that are hard of hearing that do not have an interpreter, that there is a sound system in that room where it can be increased because I know a couple of times, sometimes, it was really hard --

CARLA: Without a sound system. Good call. I will absolutely make sure.

KAT: That's happened numbers of times.

CARLA: You know what? I will make sure -- I will talk to John who makes all the arrangements. He's the guy. So I will talk to John and see if I can figure out -- well, see if I can ensure that we are in a room with a sound system. That's a good, valid point. Thank you.

>> That's imperative. Imperative.

CARLA: Anybody else? Okay folks. Here's my plan. I intend to put an agenda together to post on the National website for this division. I'm sorry, like I said, I flew out here on Sunday to Minnesota and I've been working since I got here, so I am hopeful that earlier next week, I will have that done. I can talk -- Shelia and I can talk about putting that together, and then we will get it posted as soon as we can so that people at least have an idea, and until then, please feel free to use the DeafBlind listserv and communicate with people, and Shelia and I, Shelia should be on that, and if there's nothing else, it has been great talking to you guys.

We've got --

KAT: Our website still exists, correct?

CARLA: So this is the thing and I'm sorry, Robert. I meant to send this information to you. Brian Mackey sent me an e-mail with all of the information about posting, passwords, all that stuff and I don't know how it went past me, but I did not forward it, but I do have it. Who wants it?

KAT: Not me, says Kat. I don't know anything about that stuff.

>> Can I ask a question? I don't mean to interrupt.

CARLA: My understanding is that the website has not been updated for about a year. We have all the information to do that, so what I think would be helpful and we don't have to do it prior to convention, which is coming up pretty quickly, but at convention, I can put that on the agenda that somebody is going to take over the website, if we have people who are interested in doing that.

>> Great.

KAT: Could we also -- I have contacts for the previous treasurer of the division, but do we have contacts to get in touch with him for the banking stuff?

CARLA: Okay. You know what, thank you for mentioning. It is my memory and I don't know if I'm correct. Did you guys want -- for the last division report, which there wasn't one filed for you. Do you want -- the national organization has offered to host all of the treasuries for any divisions who are interested, which also means they would handle all of your filings at the end of the year at no cost to the division.

KAT: It's fantastic, guys. We do nothing.

CARLA: You do nothing. Your treasurer is advised. They get information monthly about what's going on, if any transactions occur. But it's not something you individually need to deal with or as a division. If dues is all paid online, all that money would drop right into your account so it would be a matter of just transferring the account you have had under the national control, and then they would manage it and they would file all of your 990s.

>> I think we should do that.

KAT: This, too, guys, correct me if I'm wrong, I did do some research on this sometime last year. I spoke to Patty Chen, this may also allow us to use the national 501(c)(3) status for fundraising which would open us up so much for options.

>> We have five minutes, guys.

CATHY: This is Cathy, I want to make real sure that for right now, if we go to the website and we attend to the NFB DB on NFB net, we're going to get all the information we need?

CARLA: About what? What information?

CATHY: Well, I didn't get the constitution, the information about --

CARLA: This is an internal communication thing. I didn't realize that Shelia was not on the list so it's fixed now. So from now on, I don't think this is going to be a problem. We will add the other people on to the listserv who weren't previously on it, so everybody who's on this call should start getting all of the communication.

>> Thank you.

SHELIA: Just in case they don't, if you don't get it in the next 24 hours, it shouldn't take that long. Drop me a message at president@NFBmo.org, so it's NFB M-O of Missouri. And that way, I will get your e-mail and can drop it directly to you.

CARLA: But we will get you added to the list, so anybody who is not currently on the list, we want to make sure you get there. So if you can even reply to the NFB DB list, I will make sure that your e-mail gets added on to the list. Okay?

>> And maybe repeat one more time where people can go to pay their dues because somebody just asked that in the chat.

CARLA: Okay. The place to go is going to be -- I got it. I'll send it out. I will send it out.

>> Sounds good.

CARLA: I will forward Bridgett's e-mail which has very specific, I just got it ten minutes before the meeting, so I didn't have time, but I will put it on the listserv. Thank you for that, and I will make sure that everybody has those instructions to pay dues.

>> Perfect thank you. This has been great. Appreciate it.

CARLA: Oh, my gosh, it has been a very productive meeting you guys.

Thank you so much for your time and I look forward to -- Shelia and I will be running the division meeting at national convention and if there's anything, please feel free to contact either of us in the interim. Put it on the listserv, whatever you feel comfortable doing and we'll do our best to respond to whatever questions, comments, concerns you have.

>> All right, thank you.

>> Thank you.

CARLA: Have a great night.