NFBAZ November 19, 2023, Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes

Virtual

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 AM by president Donald Porterfield.

Role call:

All Board members were present, being Donald Porterfield, Jordan Moon, Bob Kresmer, Donna Silba, Marcus Schmidt, Amy Porterfield, Joanne Williams, Mark Feliz, Rachel Kuntz, Sharonda Goode, and Tarik Williams.

Approximately 15 others were in attendance, including Cheryl, Connie, Rodney, Lori, Michael, Joe, Jenny, Tony and Tina, Robert, Amar, Sami chavez, Tim, Abdallah, Elton Yazi.

Donald led the national and NFB pledges.

Secretary's report:

Minutes of the prior 3 meetings were distributed in advance, including:

a) Minutes of August 13th board meeting by Amy Porterfield;

b) Sep. 4th business session at state convention by Marcus;

c) Oct. 13 executive board meeting by Marcus.

All were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's report by donna Silba:

Donna presented the treasurer’ report and it was approved as presented. In an effort to protect our financial records, the full report with numbers has been presented to members of the board and will not be distributed over the list serve.

We will switch to PayPal for our payment processing sometime after the new year.

Philosophy session – National Federation of the Blind’s 6 core branding values:

Donald began by reviewing these core values, being

1. collective action
2. courage
3. respect
4. love and welcome,
5. full participation
6. democracy.

Examples of collective action include determining direction at conventions, washington seminar and phoenix seminar, working in committees, Bell academy.

Legislative report by Joanne Williams:

a) Phoenix seminar on Jan. 17th:

She plans to start preparing for this earlier than before, sending out Emails well in advance, so that our reps will be well familiarized by the time we meet with him, which will allow us to focus on one or two issues.

Donald mentioned that one issue we'll focus on is accessible mail in voting with electronic returns.

b) Washington seminar, held Jan. 30th through Feb. 2nd:

Joanne mentioned that we have two new members of the house, but the other 7 representatives remained the same.

Holiday inn at the capitol is accepting reservations now, with a great rate of $119 a night plus tax.

Those who would like to attend Washington seminar but would like financial assistance should send Donald an email by Dec. 15th, with "financial assistance" in subject line.

Even those not needing assistance are asked to let Donald know of their plans to attend.

Those who cannot attend are urged to email their representative and senators, explaining why they support the issues.

Bob made motion to clarify that the 10,000 in funds allocated for financial assistance explicitly include the Porterfields.

c) Election and follow-up:

All who voted are encouraged to share their experiences through national survey, or they can send their input to Joanne at jwilliams@saavi.us.

d) Legislative priorities in 2022:

- Web site and software application accessibility act;

- Access technology affordability act, hr 431 and s 212;

- medical device non-visual accessability act;

- transformation to competitive integrated employment act.

For more information about these, people are asked to visit nfb.org, and urge their representatives to support the bills.

Membership committee by Tarik Williams:

a) Yuma chapter:

Donald mentioned that the board voted at last month's executive board meeting to suspend the Yuma chapter, in hopes that it will be revived at some time in the future; meanwhile, its funds will be held for 3 years in the affiliate treasury

b) west valley chapter:

Donald believes that the board feels the west valley is still a viable chapter, but needs help.

He mentioned that having a consistent meeting location would greatly help.

At last month's executive board meeting, it was recommended that the chapter hold an organizing meeting at a library in the west valley area, and talk about independence and connecting.

The chapter should then have an activity that people can get involved in shortly after this orientation meeting.

Marcus also mentioned that a chapter-building task force, which Bob recommended be formed, would be very helpful to help organize activities and kick-start the chapter again.

He mentioned that one of the chapter's challenges is that almost half of the 12 active members are elderly and about third have multiple disabilities.

c) at-large chapter:

Donald mentioned that he still plans to rebuild an at-large chapter for our affiliate.

d) national membership update:

A membership meeting for the state is planned for Dec. 6th at 6:30.

Tarik encouraged all chapter presidents to ensure the membership rosters are up to date, in preparation from upcoming chapter elections and national database refresh beginning of next year.

Any changes should be submitted to Daniel McCann by Dec. 31/.

Donald recommended we adopt a practice from Maryland in which new members are announced at state convention.

State convention wrap-up:

Donald welcomed newly elected board members with Mark Feliz, Sharonda Good and Rachel Kuntz.

Jordan was happy to report that no reports were received of anyone catching Covid at the convention.

He plans to kick off the next series of convention arrangements meetings on Feb. 23rd.

Amy commended how many volunteers we have at our conventions compared to others.

What's going on in the National Federation of the Blind

Donald announced that the next national convention will be in Houston July first through 6th.

The board of directors is working on a strategic plan, which they are still seeking input for through the membership, in order to be ready to present a plan at the next national convention.

Concerning the museum of the history of the blind movement, 20 million will be required to get it off the ground.

Though it will reside in Baltimore, the plan is that components of it will travel around the country.

He pointed out that the National Federation of the Blind website has a 5-year calendar of diversity, equity, and inclusion dates of special note to be taken into consideration when planning official activities; chapter and committee chairs are encouraged to consult that calendar when planning activities and events.

Donald reminded people that Nov. 29th is giving Tuesday, and people are encouraged to support NFB, for which Vispero has pledged matching grants for the first$ 50,000.

Bob encouraged people to check with their employer, to see if they have matching contributions to the organization of choice.

Braille readers are leaders program is starting Dec. 5th, for which registration will be done through Beanstack again.

Amy found the app to be accessible via Jaws; but anyone still experiencing difficulties registering should contact Ashleigh Moon.

Joanne suggested that we hold an information session about the American action fund, as they fund many things in the National Federation of the Blind’s movement, such as the Braille Readers are Leaders program.

Letters from Santa (aka winter celebration) has already begun, with packets going out Dec. 6th.

Chapter and division reports:

East valley by Mark Feliz:

Their membership has recently grown by 6 members.

For Blindness Equality and Achievement Month (BEAM), set up an information table outside a Tempe library.

4 members gave a presentation at Mountainview high-school in Mesa, reaching about 1100 students throughout the day.

Some members participated in the Braille ballot verification process.

An accessible voting machine presentation was held during the October meeting, to encourage members to vote.

Their annual Christmas party will be held at the home of Ruth Swenson and Jim Sohl sometime in December.

Phoenix chapter by Jordan Moon:

At their recent elections, Jordan was elected president, while mike Smith was elected 1st VP and monica Nunez 2nd vice,

while rachel elected secretary, Donna treasurer, and vicki and tom board members.

Their picnic on October first was great success, with many people in attendance.

They're conducting a fund-raiser with selling fudge through Dec. 5th.

They're also planning on participating in the MLK day parade on Jan. 16th.

Tucson chapter by Tarik Williams:

For BEAM, passed out flyers at Tucson Meet Yourself event.

At Pima county recorder's office, shared thoughts with pole-working volunteers about how to interact with blind people

For white-cane day, put up information table at a local park, but didn't do much walking.

They also had a table at Saavi's open house event on Oct. 27th.

They are planning to hold elections 2nd week of January.

All chapters are encouraged to work with their respective mayor's office on issuing a proclamation for next year's BEAM.

West valley by Marcus Schmidt:

Besides the concerns he raised during the discussion about membership, he mentioned that they Held a social event on Oct. 22nd at Edelweiss Bier Garten, with only 2 of the 7 participants being paid west valley members but 3 others having been members before.

Students division by Ammar:

They're working with education committee to reach out to blind students with scholarship info.

They have started holding bake sales at chapter meetings to bring in more funds.

Diabetic action network:

In Matt's absence, Donald clarified that no official election was held at state convention, thereby making it more like an unofficial group.

Parents division by Ashleigh Moon:

They had an informational table at the Phoenix picnic in October.

They are planning to hold their next meeting in January.

Bob moved that affiliate set aside up to $5,000 for Iep training seminar for parents of blind children, and the motioned passed.

He also moved that up to $5000 be set aside for a state-wide leadership seminar, which was approved.

Committee reports:

Transportation by Marcus:

David steinmetz mentioned that application process beside recertification is inaccessible.

He plans to hold a meeting with Valley Metro staff and include our committee.

Marcus urged members to join committee members in making public comment at Valley Metro's upcoming board meeting on Dec. 1st.

Jean Parker suggested that we give input into Move Tucson program.

Marcus encouraged Tucson members to attend next committee meeting, to see how much overlap there is between Maricopa county issues and Pima county's.

Donald suggested that committee divided into subcommittees for each major county but retain a single committee for the affiliate.

Scholarships by Amy Porterfield:

Donald urged everyone to help spread the word about next year's scholarship program.

Education by Ashleigh Moon:

No report was given, due to time constraints.

For the same reason, no Fund-raising or technology committee report was given.

The meeting was adjourned around 12:40 Pm.

Submitted by Marcus Schmidt