National Federation Of The Blind, Tucson Chapter

Minutes For The Meeting Of February 3, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 PM.

Attendance: There were 12 people attending in-person and one attending via Zoom.

Both pledges were recited.

Jenna Faris and Luke Boccuzzo were voted into the chapter as new members.

The secretary’s report was adopted as sent to the membership.

A motion was passed to table the treasurer’s report until the March meeting.

The nominating committee comprised of Donald Porterfield, Mariana Flores and Tarik Williams has met and has forwarded the following slate to the membership for the upcoming elections: Cody Beardslee, vice president Abdullah Shuli, Jean Parker secretary and Joanne Williams treasurer. In addition, the nominating committee recommends Briana McDowell for board position 1, Tim Kalk for board position 2 and Tarik Williams for Board position 4. Mariana Flores will remain in board position 3. Jay Rasmusen has resigned from the board.

Jean said that she would continue serving as secretary if the following three conditions are met:

1. The holding of regular meetings of the chapter board of directors.

2. The advanced distribution to the membership of any documents such as meeting minutes, treasurer’s reports or other relevant information for upcoming meetings that require membership action to facilitate adequate consideration.

3. Regular and timely communication with the membership including meeting notices, proposed agendas and invitations to participate in events.

It was added that board members should make themselves available and respond to communications from the membership.

 A discussion took place about whether or not people could nominate themselves and how nominations can be submitted from the floor during elections. The nominating committee’s slate was adopted as presented. Cody gave his contact details for anyone to discuss ideas for the chapter. Anyone who would like to contact Cody for this purpose should contact him by email at codybeardslee@gmail.com or by phone at 763-291-3711.

The election will be held at the March meeting.

A discussion took place about how to facilitate the communication of groups who are working on projects for the chapter. In the past, this has been done by distributing a roster of the membership but this practice has been discontinued. Bob suggested that the chapter leadership develop a strategy to share relevant contact details and that the Zoom link be left open for people to meet informally to work on their projects.

The board officers currently do not have access to the full membership list. Although Amy Porterfield is the membership chair for the chapter, a membership committee has not been established yet. Cody will discuss getting access to the full list with David Andrews who is the listserv administrator at the national office. The list of officers for the Tucson chapter needs to be updated on the Arizona affiliate web site as well. In addition, there have been new members who have joined in 2023 who might not have been added to the membership list. It was decided to resolve the question of gaining access to the full membership list before moving forward on a distribution strategy. It is important for the membership committee to work on re-engaging with past members and spend time getting to know those who are new.

Everyone was reminded that the next state affiliate board meeting will be held on February 10, 2024.

There were eight people from Arizona who attended the Washington Seminar this year. Most of the meetings were with Congressional aides. Cody provided a summary of the bills the NFB is promoting. Follow-up activities to encourage co-sponsorship of these bills will be forthcoming.

At the Phoenix seminar, the emphasis was on adding blind people to the online voting system used by those in the military or living overseas. It was confirmed that this voting system is accessible and that adding blind people would be a simple matter. Reinstatement of funding for the older blind program was also discussed with state representatives.

The chapter picnic committee will meet each Wednesday at 7:00 PM to plan this event. The committee will review what has been done in the past and determine what to do this year. A motion was passed for the chapter to contribute $350.00 to support ramada rental and food. There will be both meat and vegetarian options. It was decided to have this event be a teaching opportunity for SAAVI students who want to learn how to barbecue. The leftover food will be auctioned off at the end of the picnic. Outreach will be done to ensure participation from the BELL students and parents. Additional details will be handled by the picnic committee.

Everyone was encouraged to listen to the February presidential release.

Tim said that the Texas Roadhouse restaurant on South Wilmot Road will partner with the chapter to raise funds from their customers. A date from Monday to Thursday from 3:00 to 9:00 PM in March will be selected for the event. Ten percent of all profits for that day will go to the Tucson chapter. We can have a table with fliers and other educational materials and we can do this on a quarterly basis. Cody will check to see what literature we have available and how to order additional publications if necessary. They also have peanuts we can sell. Clarification was requested about how the funds get to the chapter if they go through the state affiliate. Those who would like to help should contact Tim directly.

Barbara reminded everyone to take the blind exemption option on their tax returns.

Lupita said that the Achilles group will begin having workouts on the second Saturday of each month in Reid Park.

It was requested that the next meeting agenda include a discussion about having a horseback riding event in the Fall.

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 PM.

The next chapter meeting with elections will be held on Saturday, March 2, at 1:00 PM.

Submitted by Jean Parker, Secretary