National Federation of the Blind of Florida

Greater Jacksonville Chapter

Saturday, March 1, 2025

Jacksonville Center for Independent Living

2709 Art Museum Drive

Jacksonville, FL 32207, and on Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 AM.

Introductions

In attendance:

President: Kaye Baker

Vice President: Russ Davis

Secretary: Fallon Minichiello

Treasurer: Jason Keve

Board Member: Marty Miller

Board Member: Adriann Keve

Board Member: Sarah Jacobs

Members: Marita Winston, Latoya Kendrick, James Jacobs, Peggy Fleischer, David Fleischer, Jose Morales, Andy Rood

Visitor: Michelle Raymond

NFB Pledge, and 1 minute message; Recited by all: Andy recited the pledge, and Marty recited the 1 minute message.

Approval of the February Secretary’s report – Fallon: Marita motioned to accept the minutes as distributed. Jose seconded. The motion passed.

Approval of the October, November and February Treasurer’s reports – Jason: Russ and Jason will finish up with October and November’s treasurer’s reports as well as the annual treasurer’s report which will go to Sylvia. Jason read February’s treasurer’s report as follows: the beginning balance in the chapter’s checking account = $2,462.91, and the ending balance in the chapter’s checking account = $2,422.91. Restricted Funds = $580.00; $100.00 for Braille and Education related expenditures and $480.00 for Fund raising related expenditures from the Navy Wives. Non-Restricted Funds = $1,842.91. The beginning and ending balance in the chapter’s savings account = $100.00 For PayPal, the beginning balance = $96.53, and the ending balance = $272.61. Russ advised the $52 donation David Fleischer made was for Jax Packs and not a donation to the chapter. Russ suggested moving the money that is currently in PayPal to the checking account. Jason will amend the report to correct David’s donation. It was decided we would start doing an automatic bill pay for the affiliate PAC plan donation and send it in enough time to reach the affiliate. Peggy motioned to accept the report as read. Russ seconded. The motion passed.

If you have not paid Chapter dues for 2025, please plan to do so soon so that you will be included in the chapter roster and email list that will be sent to Sylvia by March 31 so that members can continue receiving minutes and treasurer’s reports.

Joint project between the NFB Greater Jacksonville Chapter and the Rotary Club to provide funding for Meta Smart Glasses for local residents: Kaye advised of how this idea got started. We, along with the Rotary Club, have begun the process of approving a grant which would enable blind residents in Duval or St. Johns County to receive a pair of the Meta Smart Glasses. The grant would cover 75% of the cost and would also include training courtesy of The Magnification Company, while the member would cover 25% of the cost and after being approved would need to submit a 5-10 video of how they are using the Meta Smart Glasses. The grant money would total $6,000 and cover 17 pairs of the Meta Smart Glasses. The grant would run from September 2025 to March 2026. We discussed the grant process and eligibility. Kaye will speak to the Rotary Club in April regarding our organization and will publicize this grant to the media. Kaye, Marita, Peggy, Fallon, and Jose will serve on a committee to screen the grant applications for who will get the Meta smart glasses with Kaye as the committee chair. Kaye advised if anyone knows anyone that would be interested to have them contact her.

Legislative and Advocacy Update – Russ

We will dedicate some time this month to the discussion of some federal and state legislation that will negatively impact the lives of blind people. We can do our part.   Come find out how! On the national level, two bills have been introduced in the House: the Blind Americans Return to Work Act (H.R. 1175), which was introduced by Representative Pete Sessions of Texas on February 10 and will eliminate the SSDI earnings cliff by instituting a two-for-one phase out of benefits for any income earned above the substantial gainful activity threshold, and the Access Technology Affordability Act (ATAA), H.R. 1529, which was introduced by Representative Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania on February 24 and will create a $2,000 refundable tax credit for the purchase of qualified access technology for the blind. Florida is part of the Texas v. Becerra lawsuit that has been filed by seventeen states’ attorney generals against the federal government regarding updated rules which add “gender dysphoria” to the federal definition of “disability” under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. As a result, these states have charged that this addition to the regulations renders Section 504 unconstitutional. As a reminder, Section 504 requires that entities which receive federal funding, like schools and hospitals, cannot discriminate on the basis of disability. A template email has been created that can be emailed to Florida’s attorney general regarding our opposition to Florida’s involvement in this lawsuit which at the time of the meeting was still taking responses due to a pause in the administering of the lawsuit. If you wish to contact Florida’s attorney general regarding this matter, Use the below email address for Attorney General James Uthmeier:

[citizenservices@myfloridalegal.com](mailto:citizenservices@myfloridalegal.com)

Several states have withdrawn their participation due to the outpouring of dissent within their states. On the state level, Florida Senator Jennifer Bradley of District 6 has introduced SB1050, a bill designed to consolidate all disability services into the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Florida Representative Jennifer Kincart-Jonsson of District 49 introduced HB1103, a companion bill in the Florida House. A template has also been created to email to our state legislators regarding our opposition to this consolidation. Kaye described her experience when Georgia’s legislature voted to consolidate all of their disability agencies in to one. Florida Senator Ileana Garcia of District 36 has introduced SB396 which intends to require all Vote By Mail requesters to show proof from a medical professional they are unable to physically go to a polling precinct to cast their ballot. An email template has also been created to email our state legislators regarding our opposition to this bill. Russ described the legislative call that took place on February 25. Jose advised how different disability groups and advocates are working together regarding their opposition to the various legislation that has been discussed and discussed his meeting with state legislators in Tallahassee. Fallon will forward all emails regarding the legislation that has been discussed which will also include the templates that have been mentioned.

Florida Affiliate Cruise Fundraiser: Kaye described the cruise that the affiliate and Dream vacations have put together. We will set sail on the Norwegian Prima for a seven-night cruise from October 18 to October 26, 2026. We will set sail from the port of Canaveral and visit the Dominican Republic, Tortola British Virgin Islands, Saint Thomas Bahamas, and Stirrup K. All cabins are priced based on double occupancy and the final payment is due by June 20, 2026. Balcony cabins will cost $2,967 or $1,483 per person. Interior cabins cost $2,404 or $1,202 per person.

Cindy at Dream Vacations is ready to answer any questions and book your cabin. For additional information or to reserve your cabin today, call Cindy Kiper at 813-418-0647.

  Events Committee Report – Latoya: Fallon sent out an email the day before the meeting regarding March events. We will be attending Second Saturday Jazz at the Friendship Fountain on MARCH 8 which is from 7:00 PM –9:30 PM. Bring your own chair or blanket and enjoy the music of the band!

[WEBSITE](https://dtjax.com/events/second-saturday-jazz-at-the-fountain/2024-07-13/)

**ADDRESS**

1015 Museum CIR

Jacksonville, Florida 32207

**ADMISSION**: **FREE**

We will be eating brunch on March 15 at 9:30 AM at Keke’s Breakfast Cafe located at 12959 Atlantic Blvd  
Jacksonville, FL, 32225

[(904) 865-4979](tel:(904)%20865-4979)

For the jazz event, members will need to RSVP by March 4, and for Keke’s, members will need to RSVP by MARCH 12. There are several walks that will be occurring on April 5 that members will be attending.

Latoya has reached out to hotels regarding the ball, and as the Tim of the meeting, the Doubletree is the only one that has responded with a $5,000 food and beverage minimum. We discussed other hotel options as well as food options. For next month, in addition to the walks, we will be attending the Asian Market on April 19. Fallon will email out April’s events next month. If anyone has suggestions for any events, please let the committee know.

Final thoughts and next meeting date: It was decided that our next meeting will be on April 5 at 2:00 PM at Culhane’s Irish Pub located at 9720 Deer Lake CT Jacksonville, Florida 32246. Latoya will call to confirm availability and will let Kaye know by March 4.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 PM.