Tampa Bay Chapter

National Federation of the Blind of Florida

Chapter Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2019

O’Brien’s Irish Pub and Grill

701 West Lumsden Road

Brandon, Florida

The meeting was called to order by President Miranda Kilby by phone at 12:00PM. She led the group in saying the NFB Pledge.

All introduced themselves. There were 18 persons in attendance

Vice president Merry Schoch chaired the meeting in the absence of the president.

Merry introduced our guest speaker from HART, Ivan Maldonado, the director of Bus operations.

Topics covered included: increased security on HART buses, the contested local tax increase referendum , concerns about the contract with Yellow Cab, and problems of fake service animals being taken on buses and the need to educate drivers about their rightsand responsibilities. Merry said she and Marion would be happy to work with HART on this issue.

Merry thanked Mr. Maldonado for coming and addressing the questions and concerns of the members. Mr. Maldonado in turn thanked the chapter for sharing their suggestions and concerns with him.

Marion announced that Hillsborough County Commissioner Stacy White has filed an appeal with the Florida Supreme Court asking that it invalidate the county’s one cent transportation surtax amendment which was passed by the voters. White’s appeal also has the backing of the Florida House and Senate. Merry asked if chapter members would be interested in going to Tallahassee on Feb. 5 to lend our support to the referendum. Many were interested, so we will look into obtaining transportation for such a trip.

Secretary and Treasurer’sReports

A motion was made by Marion, seconded by Dan, to approve the August meeting minutes as emailed. The motion passed.

Dan read the treasurer’s report which was previously emailed to the chapter list. Our current balance is $1971.65.

A motion was made by Gloria, seconded by Sherrill, to approve the treasurer’s report as read. The motion passed.

Old Business

Meet the Blind Month Activities

Merry encouraged everyone to attend the White Cane walk on October 26 from 10:00 till 11:30AM. We will meet at the corner of Spruce and Dale Mabry. We will have lunch afterwards at the Denny’s restaurant. Marion reminded all to attend our other Meet the Blind event, to be held in conjunction with the Tampa Mayor’s food truck rally on November 6, from 11:00 till 2:00, in Gaslight Park. We will have a table with NFB literature to hand out, as well as educating the public about Braille and using a white cane or guide dog. Marion will provide live music.

Holiday Party

Jeanette volunteered to find out whether we can hold our annual Christmas party at the Rose Harbor apartment complex again this year.

Dan moved that December 21st be considered for our holiday party. After some discussion Merry called for a roll call vote. The vote determined that we will not consider the 21st since that date is too close to Christmas.

New Business

Merry said Miranda wanted to let us know that she is feeling better and will be attending our monthly meeting in November. We will discuss possible changes to our constitution involving staggering of terms for officers and board members, bringing our chapter elections in line with our state constitution.

Following discussion we decided that prior to a vote, it would be a good idea to hold our January meeting at Debbie Hietala’s cafeteria Crystal Bay Café at the county courthouse.

We will use this as an outreach opportunity and send out invitations via the talking book library.

Fundraising

Gloria said that as the co-chair of the chapter’s fundraising committee, we need to plan a fundraising event. Marion, the other co-chair, said they need to hold a meeting to discuss it. He mentioned the possibility of holding a Mardigras fundraiser. Yvonne Rosanelli and Dan Hicks volunteered to be on the committee. Marion said when they hold the meeting, it will be open, and all who are interested can join the call.

NFBF Holiday Calendar Raffle Fundraiser

Merry encouraged everyone to participate in this annual fundraiser by selling tickets they already have, or by taking more books to sell.

Guide dog user advocacy

Marion invited those interested in guide dog issues to support him at a county ordinance violation hearing concerning an attack by loose dogs on his guide dog last march. The hearing will be held at 9AM on October 23 at the county courthouse, courtroom 300.

NFBF Senior Concerns

Gloria announced that the September Senior Concerns call will deal with the topic of accessible technology and will be presented by NFBF board member George Hernandez.

Merry invited those not yet on the Tampa chapter email list to subscribe.

Our 50/50 drawing in the amount of $24 was won by Lynn Reynolds.

Our next meeting will be held on November 23, at Beef O’Brady’s at 8810 N. Himes in Tampa.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50PM.

Respectfully submitted

Sherrill O’Brien, Secretary

Tampa Bay Chapter

National Federation of the Blind of Florida

Phone 813-935-0474, cell 813-767-1890

Email Sherrill.obrien@verizon.net

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise expectations because low expectations create barriers between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want! Blindness is not what holds you bac