Tampa Bay Chapter

National Federation of the Blind of Florida

Chapter Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2020

Because of the restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the chapter members met from our homes by conference call via the Zoom meeting platform

The meeting was called to order by President Miranda Kilby at 12:05PM.

She introduced a guest speaker, Joel Pursinger, from the company Vispero. It is headquartered in Clearwater, and is a conglomerate of assistive technology providers including Freedom Scientific.

Joel gave a brief history of the company. Vispero would like him to test some of their designs. He invited us to help with his research by participating in two online surveys he is conducting. He wants to get feedback from users on both current products and those being designed. He commented that too often when blind people purchase their products they do not fully integrate them into their daily lives. Louise suggested that Vispero create and keep on hand a few Braille manuals for those preferring that format. Joel will send an email to Miranda with the details and links to the surveys, and she will pass it along to the chapter list.

Miranda thanked him for speaking to us about the work he is doing and for his interest in our feedback and suggestions.

Everyone then introduced themselves, and there were 17 members in attendance, including our state president Denise Valkema.

Paul led us in the NFB Pledge.

Secretary and Treasurer’sReports

A motion was made by Barbara, seconded by Louise, to accept the February 2020 meeting minutes as emailed. The motion passed.

Dan gave the treasurer’s report. Our current balance is $2,187.33.

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

President’s Report

Miranda said we are uncertain about whether the date of our state convention will need to be changed. NFB President Riccobono advises that we wait a bit before making any decisions, giving the hotel the incentive to work with us if we have to move the date. This will most likely insure that we will not incur a financial penalty. Miranda said we do have a good relationship with the hotel.

Nevertheless, our planning committee will continue to meet as usual, with Tampa and Tallahassee the host chapters.

New Business

Paul announced that NFB President Riccobono will host the first-ever “Presidential Release Live”, to be held by teleconference via Zoom on April 2 at 8PMEDT. Denise announced that the affiliate will hold a teleconference this upcoming Tuesday, March 31, and encouraged all to call in so we can connect with one another in this difficult time.

Miranda called for a discussion of how we can continue to do the work of the chapter, and how we can stay connected with each other during this time of sheltering in place.

Miranda: planning for a fundraiser can be done over the phone and can begin right away

Marion: planning for Meet the Blind Month can also be accomplished with phone meetings

Gloria: we can use this time to make calls to and catch up with chapter members

Louise: we could share recipes via the chapter list

Our next meeting will be held on April 25, and once again it will be a conference call via Zoom.

Miranda thanked Marion for allowing us to use the NAGDU Zoom account.

Barbara asked if the Talking Book library might be willing to send out a notice that our meeting will be held via teleconference. Miranda said she will look into that possibility.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:19Pm

Respectfully submitted

Sherrill O’Brien, Secretary

Tampa Bay Chapter

National Federation of the Blind of Florida

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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