Tampa Bay Chapter

National Federation of the Blind of Florida

Chapter Meeting Minutes

July 19, 2025

Beef O’ Brady’s

8810 North Himes Avenue

Tampa, Florida

\*\*NOTE\*\*: Secretary Sherrill O’Brien was not in attendance as she was celebrating her birthday with family. NFBF secretary Sherri Brun took these chapter meeting minutes.

The meeting was called to order by President Christine Copley at 10:32AM. The meeting followed a very successful annual fund-raising pancake breakfast. The NFB pledge was recited. Several people commented on the NFB pledge and why it is said in MFB chapters throughout the country. Chapter members and guests introduced themselves. There were 17 people in attendance which included members, a prospective member and guests.

Approval of the June Minutes was tabled and they will be approved by email.

Dan Hicks presented the treasurer’s report for July 19. Current balance is $4,287.32. Considering the money that will be collected including $275.00 from Sherrill and deducting the payment to Beef O’ Brady’s for $200.00 for the pancake breakfast, the total amount made for this event is $765.00. The motion was made by Merry, seconded by Marion to approve the treasurer’s report as read. The motion carried.

Those who attended the National Federation of the Blind 2025 convention were asked to share their observations about the convention. Yvonne summarized the convention highlighting the speakers, seminars and some topics discussed.

The upcoming National Federation of the Blind of Florida convention was next discussed. Sherri summarized convention details. These included location, which is the Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs hotel, banquet and registration costs, dates of convention (October 3 through 5 and transportation by train was discussed. Christine suggested the Tampa Bay chapter should have a table in the exhibit hall. Merry made the motion that the chapter will provide an active membership dues-paying member $25 for the registration of going to state convention as well as $30 towards the transportation of their choice. Dan seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Sherri mentioned the awards that will be given out at the state convention. These include the rising star award, member of the year, the blind at heart award for a worthy sighted member and the best chapter or division of the year award.

Scholarships will be given out to students who are attending or planning to attend college. The Tampa Bay chapter has contributed $750 towards our scholarships.

Christine encouraged chapter members to sit together while attending convention to show chapter unity. Christine also suggested that chapter members mentor a person who is attending the state convention for the first time.

Sherri and Dan explained the dollar auction which will take place at the convention. The chapter members were encouraged to get door prize donations and auction items. Merry made the motion and Dan seconded for the chapter to donate $200 for door prizes. The motion carried.

Future meeting dates were discussed. Because the restaurant needs the room on our usual meeting date, the next meeting will take place August 16 from 12PM to 2PM. A reminder will be sent out.

A spirit night was discussed. October was suggested since it is Blind Equality Achievement month. This will be discussed further at the next meeting. Merry talked about a past event where venders came and there were product demonstrations and demonstrations of how blind people do things that others may think are difficult for blind people. This could also be tied in with auctioning off the Mike Evans football at that event. Locations for the event were suggested.

Yvonne asked if anyone had taken over the parental concerns for the state of Florida? Sherri responded that this is an idea in progress and she will bring it to the board’s attention at the next board meeting.

Marion and Merry discussed the accessible game Power Showdown which is a combination of Ping-Pong and air hockey. The Tampa Lighthouse has this game and has invited us to come and learn about it. They will even make the Lighthouse available on Saturdays if we are interested.

Speakers for our meetings were discussed. Christine would like to invite a person who works for an insurance company to discuss insurance options. Open enrollment begins October 15 so this should be done in August or September. Other speakers were mentioned, such as instructors in movement, dance and self-defense.

Adrian brought up the CERT program which trains people to deal with emergency situations. She will be taking the training in August.

Christine mentioned there are difficulties with the national email list. Some people are not receiving emails. Christine will also create another address book. Some NFB entities have gone to private email lists. Fishing and impersonating of members have taken place.

Sherri mentioned that a lot of legislative updates are coming through and she is sure Debby will keep the chapter informed.

Debbie also talked about business cards in print and braille

Dan moved and Merry seconded that the meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Sherri Brun, Secretary

National Federation of the Blind of Florida

For Sherrill O’Brien, Tampa Bay Chapter Secretary.