National Federation of the Blind

Potomac Chapter Minutes

September 13, 2023

President Sandy Halverson called the meeting to order a little after 7:00 PM at St. George’s Church. The following members were present: Kassahun, Diana, Christine, Gary, John, Sarah, Patty, Seton, Sandy, Julie, Laura, and Bonnie.

The chapter celebrated Kassahun, who just received his doctorate in international criminal justice.

Sandy asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A correction was provided, and John moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Sandy entertained a motion to approve the treasurer’s report. Sarah told the chapter that members could give their money for wine tasting to her. John moved, and Christine seconded to approve the report. The report was approved.

Sandy provided a summary of the recent chapter board meeting. The board recommended that the chapter give our youth fund balance to the Virginia affiliate for the BELL program. The Kiwanis Club originally gave the chapter the funding for youth programs, but the chapter had been discussing using the money for affiliate youth programs instead. Patty moved, and Christine seconded. The motion was approved.

Sandy told everyone that the student division is attempting to get more involved with local chapters and the affiliate. To that end, the students are planning an event and invited the Potomac chapter to partner with them. The student division is planning an event at a restaurant in Falls Church. Sandy and John are planning to meet with them and the restaurant manager this weekend to get more details.

Sandy suggested that the chapter sell World’s Finest chocolate at the state convention. The chapter discussed how many bars to sell and how many people would attend the convention to buy them.

John described his research on a fundraiser at Ledo Pizza. He explained that we have to choose one location, and the restaurant forces customers to choose among pick-up, delivery, or in-person service. The chapter agreed that John should continue his research.

Sandy brought up a new member social event. She announced that the event has moved from September 16th to September 23rd. The meeting will take place at 3:00 PM at the Halverson’s house.

The next topic of discussion was the bus for state convention. Sandy indicated that 8 members of the Alexandria chapter were interested in taking the bus on the return trip. John found that it would be $4,800 for 54 people. The chapter discussed the Amtrack prices and schedules for the trip to Williamsburg.

John spoke to the chapter about the resolutions that will come up at state convention. One resolution concerns the audio pedestrian signals. The goal is for the signal to give us the same information a sighted person would receive from looking at the traffic light. John announced he wants to take a similar resolution to the national convention.

Sandy called Tracy on speaker phone to talk to the chapter about state convention. Tracy brought up the transportation topic again. Tracy advertised the state convention to the chapter. He announced that Donald Porterfield will be the national rep, and Donald’s wife Amy will be attending convention with him. Christine announced that issues with the hotel pricing have been fixed. If anyone is interested in volunteering to lead a seminar, they should email him.

Sandy asked Tracy about the wine tasting. So far there are 20 participants. Tracy invited others to sign up. Tracy stated that there will be a wine gift basket that Sharon is compiling, including a French bottle of wine. Raffle tickets for the basket will be five dollars, and Tracy needs people to write on index cards. Patty agreed to help Sean collect money for the raffle tickets. Tracy also asked for help with the clean-up. Tracy then asked for someone to be stationed at the Clarendon metro at 2:30 PM to walk to the Lion Village Community House. Finally, Tracy asked for a greeter to welcome people to the event, and Sandy volunteered to serve as the greeter.

Sandy provided a summary of the presidential release. Some of the points from the release are as follows:

* There was a Labor Day leadership Seminar called Twisted Pilots.
* President Riccobono mentioned that a future convention may take place in Chicago.
* Lego Braille bricks can now be ordered online
* APH released a series on how to use the Braile Lego blocks.
* The national office launched a member profile where members can update their information independently.
* Congress is back in session, and everyone should contact their representatives about our initiatives.
* The great gathering will take place on January 29, 2024.
* There is a statement from the national board about safety for all marginalized groups available on the website.

The chapter discussed an upcoming dragon boating event. On October 1st, at the wharf, the dragon boat team will be holding a fundraiser and will allow anyone who is interested to try out dragon boating.

Christine spoke about a video featuring a man who encouraged people to deny riders with service animals. She described his tip for ride share drivers. His position is that as long as a driver doesn’t refuse a ride, they are not breaking the law. Christine wrote to YouTube about the video. She is hoping that leaders in the NFB should talk to people.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie A. Orozco, Recording Secretary