# Winchester Federation of the Blind Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2025

## Call to Order

Our President, Wayne Williams, called our January 2025 Winchester Federation of the Blind meeting to order at 10:01 AM on Saturday, January 18, 2025.

## NFB Pledge

We all recited the NFB Pledge.

##  Ice Breaker

We went around the table and on Zoom and we all told each other about one or two of our intentions/goals for 2025.

## Meeting Attendance

A friend of James Shobert, Regan Laughlin, attended her first chapter meeting via zoom. Regan lives in Edinburg, VA, which is approximately 30 miles from Winchester, VA.

The following people attended our January 2025 chapter meeting:

Regan McLaughlin, Rodney Neely, James Shobert, Janet Lincoln, Kim DeGroot, Bill Turkel,

Gwen Moran, Jacki Brown, Chris Walker, and Wayne Williams.

## Mobility Discussion

Regan wants to get some information on orientation and mobility training. Since she lives in Edinburg, she would probably be served by the Staunton, VA regional office of the Virginia Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI).

Jacki Brown will also contact Dominique Lawless in Richmond, VA to see if Dominique can assist Regan with knowing who she should contact for orientation and mobility training.

Jacki will also speak with Dominique to see if she might be willing to come to visit our chapter to discuss orientation and mobility. The Low Vision Senior’s Group, which meets at West Minster Canterbury would also like for Dominique to speak with them about orientation and mobility.

## Approval of Treasurer’s Report and Meeting Minutes

Chris moved that both the November 2024 Treasurer’s Report and the November 2024 meeting minutes be approved. James Shobert seconded this motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

## Richmond Seminar

The Richmond Seminar will occur on Monday, January 20 and Tuesday, January 21, 2025. The meeting will be held at the Delta Hotel located at 555 E Canal St. Richmond, VA 23219

There will be an in-person Board meeting of the National Federation of the Blind of VA, which will be held from 1:00 to 4:00 PM on Monday, January 20, 2025. Then different teams of NFB members will go to visit legislators on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 from approximately 8:30 AM until 12:00 PM.

The 2025 Legislative Priorities of the Blind of Virginia include:

Priority 1:Modernize Governmental Procurement of Accessible Technology

Priority 2: Website Access under the Virginians with Disabilities Act: Technical Amendment

 The following people will be attending the meeting from our chapter: Gerry O’Malley,

Wayne Williams, Page Baggett, Janet Morton-Page’s mother, and Scott Fink.

The two major topics of discussion at the state bord meeting on Monday January 20, 2025 will be the formation and the acceptance of the constitution of the Loudoun County chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of VA and revising NFBV’s current policy on accessibility.

## Washington Seminar

The Washington Seminar will occur on February 3-6, 2025 at the Holiday Inn Washington Capitol National Mall

located at 550 C. St. S.W. Washington, DC 20024

 The three issues/priorities which the membership of the National Federation of the Blind will be promoting this year include

Priority 1 the Social Security Disability Income Earnings, Cliff-Blind People Return to Work Act, Priority 2 Advocacy for Accessible Medical Devices, and

Priority 3 ensuring that websites and apps are accessible to and usable by blind people.

Gerry O’Malley and his friend Linda Kelley will attend the Washington Seminar to represent the Winchester Federation of the Blind

## Tax Deductions for Visual Aids/Equipment

Bill Turkel asked about whether there were any tax deductions available to help blind/visually impaired people to defray the cost of purchasing technology that could enhance our independence.

Jacki Brown told us that there is a tax deduction for blind people at the federal level. Also, there is a blindness tax exemption for blind Virginians.

## Outreach Programs

###  2025 Valley Health Community Wellness Festival

Due to low attendance and somewhat less than optimal visibility of our booth at the 2024 Valley Health Community Wellness Festival, the Winchester Federation of the Blind decided not to participate in the 2025 Valley Health Community Wellness Festival this year. The 2025 Valley Health Community Wellness Festival will occur on Saturday, February 2, 2025

from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM.

We will speak with the festival organizers to see if we might be able to be placed in a more prominent location before we decide about our participation in the 2026 Valley Health Community Wellness Festival. We might want to be placed near the Winchester Host Lions Club if possible.

### Community Outreach Fair at Orchard View Elementary School

The Winchester Federation of the Blind was invited to participate in the Community Outreach Fair at Orchard View Elementary School on Tuesday, January 28, 2025. This event will be held from 5:30 to 7:00 PM at Orchard View Elementary School located at 4275 Middle Road in Winchester, VA. Wayne Williams and Rodney Neely volunteered to represent the Winchester Federation of the Blind at this community outreach fair.

We plan to give out some hard candy and some braille alphabet cards at this event.

## Chapter Swag

For now, the chapter has decided not to purchase items to hand out at our publicity oriented events. At the events that are geared towards children, we will give out hard candy to attract visitors.

## Chapter History

Jacki Brown suggested that we spend some time writing a short history of the Winchester Federation of the Blind. Rodney Neely volunteered to begin writing the history by interviewing both Mary Green and Shirley Guest Rodney is also willing to interview some other members, if we can locate them.

If we write a good chapter history, we would probably have to work with the NFB National Office to help us to write and to catalog and document our chapter history to meet their requirements.

##  A Braille Story

Jacki Brown suggested that we develop a braille story with pictures that children could use to practice reading the braille alphabet. They could use the braille alphabet cards to decode the braille story.

There might be some material that has been developed that we could use for this purpose.

## Publicity

It is important for us to go out into the community to let people know that our organization exists to help blind people or to help people, who are losing some of their vision.

## Local Lions Clubs

There are several lions clubs in our area, including the Clarke County Lions, the Stevens City Lions Club, the Winchester Host Lions Club, and the Winchester Shawnee Lions Club.

## Presidential Release

President Mark Riccobono asked us to discuss the following areas that were highlighted in the January 2025 Presidential Release: membership, the Preauthorized Contribution (PAC) plan, and asking us to think about businesses that might be willing to contribute to the National Federation of the Blind.

## Membership

We all need to reach out to meet new blind people. We can meet these people in various ways-by attending publicity oriented events-like the Chamber of Commerce. We might be referred to people who are blind by our friends.

## Membership Portal

The NFB National Office has developed a membership portal to help the national organization keep track of the members of the NFB in each state and/or chapter.

The National Office is also encouraging us to update our information/create a profile using the membership portal. [www.nfb.org/members](http://www.nfb.org/members)

## PAC Plan

PAC stands for Preauthorized Contribution. This plan enables chapters or individuals to give money to the national and state organizations of the National Federation of the Blind.

www.nfb.org/pac

Our chapter makes contributions to both the NFB national organization and the NFB of Virginia. Our chapter gives $75 to the national office each month. Our chapter also donates $25 to the NFBV state organization each month.

People can donate money to either the national or the state organization. People can make a one time donation or they can set up a monthly donation-using the PAC plan located at [www.nfb.org/pac](http://www.nfb.org/pac)

## Donation to Sullenberger’s Hardware

Jacki Brown moved that we donate $150 to Sullenberger’s Hardware for letting us use their meeting room each month. James seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## Tax Discussion

Jacki did let us know that our chapter might be assessed a $25 penalty by the state of Virginia for a filing mistake.

Jacki also let us know that we needed to renew our federal non-profit status this year. She has had difficulty getting into the portal to do this. Jacki, Wayne, and Chris will work together to resolve this matter. Right now, Jim Walker, who passed away a year and eight months ago, is our Registered Agent. This needs to be changed so that Jacki Brown is our Registered Agent.

## Program Ideas

Rodney Suggested that we might want to think about having more programs/speakers at our meetings in 2025. Wayne said that he would need some help organizing the programs/speakers. Rodney volunteered to help with this.

## Museum of the Shenandoah

Chris and Wayne agreed to follow up with Sam Scout to determine a good time for our chapter to visit the Museum of the Shenandoah. Sam asked the chapter to give her some ideas about how she might be able to make the museum’s exhibits more accessible to blind/visually impaired patrons/visitors. Jacki suggested that we try to visit the Museum of the Shenandoah in either April or May of 2025.

## Adjournment

The January 2025 meeting of the Winchester Federation of the Blind adjourned at 11:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted

Rodney Neely, Recording Secretary

The following people