# Winchester Federation of the Blind

# Board Meeting

August 30, 2025

## Call to Order

The August 30, 2025 Winchester Federation of the Blind board meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM on Saturday, August 30, 2025.

## Meeting Attendance

Our members who attended the August 30, 2025 board meeting include Janet Lincoln,

Mary Green, Jacki Brown, Gwinn Moran, Kim DeGroot, Chris Walker, Wayne Williams, James Shobert, Gerry O’Malley, and Rodney Neely. Jacki Bruce, our state membership chair person, attended our meeting for a while to explain the matter discussed below.

## Moving Elections and our Annual Membership

Jacki Bruce explained that our state organization would like for us to move our elections to January from September. This would make it easier for both our membership and communications volunteers (Jacki Bruce and Teisha Gillespie.

We should move the chapter elections and our membership dates so that all of the affiliates of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia (NFBV) are all all on the same schedule.

If all of the chapters start their elections and choose their boards of directors in January, this will facilitate communications between the chapters.

This will make it easier for Teisha and Jackie to keep track of what is going on in each chapter.

This makes Jackie’s and Teisha’s life easier.

We should want to make it easier on the state affiliate. If we have a new chapter president

We are planning to hold our elections in September of 2025 and the people who are voted into office would serve in those positions through December of 2026.

We can vote for this in September of our board meeting. The only thing that is changing is the terms that our officers and board of directors would serve for this upcoming year. They would be serving from October of 2025 through December 31, 2026.

James made a motion to change the date when we would conduct our elections starting in September of 2026. Kim seconded the motion.

This motion means that we will hold our regular elections with our current slate of officers and our board of directors as scheduled in September of 2025.

At the beginning of 2027, we will hold our election for a new slate of officers. Hence forth, we will conduct all of our elections in January so that we can conform to the way that the other state NFBV chapters conduct their elections moving forward.

The motion passed.

## Publicity and Awareness for the Amy Barnes Scholarship

The Amy Barns scholarship is out. Chris posted information about the Amy Barnes scholarship on Facebook and Rodney emailed information out to the universities and the community colleges located in the Shenandoah Valley to publicize the Amy Barnes scholarship.

## Gaggle Email Distribution Program

Wayne has discovered a New email program called Gaggle. Gaggle is a free email distribution program that we can use to distribute email messages that are of interest to people in our chapter.

Right now, only Chris and Wayne will have the ability to post information to our chapter email list. Other chapter Officers can post to the chapter email list if they request the ability to post information to the chapter email list. People who are interested in distributing information to our chapter email list should contact Wayne or Chris.

Our chapter decided to adopt the Gaggle email distribution list.

The Gaggle email distribution utility is being used as a back up because of some of the problems that we have experienced when we used the email distribution utility that the NFB national headquarters uses. This is an interim fix. We would like to express our appreciation to Wayne for coming up with this wonderful tool for us to use to distribute our chapter email

## Discussion of Revising our Chapter Constitution

If we decide to amend the constitution regarding the need for a vice-president, this information is located in articles 4 and 5.

James suggested that we might want to use some language like the Vice-president may be elected at the chapter’s discretion.

If a position is unable to be filled, the duties will be equitably shared across the chapter.

We can leave article 4 as it is now. The only officers that the chapter always needs to have a President and a treasurer.

Our chapter would like to discuss the possibility of adopting the wording that is used in our state constitution-that the majority of our members must be blind. We will discuss this at our September meeting. Our membership would like to compare our chapter’s constitution to both the constitution of the National Federation of the Blind’s national office and to the constitution of our state organization before we make any changes to our chapter’s current constitution. Wayne volunteered to obtain copies of both the constitution of our national organization and the constitution of our state organization. Wayne will distribute these constitutions to our members before our next meeting, which will occur on Saturday, September 20, 2025.

We need to remember that The chapter should be led by blind leadership. We also have to consider the longevity of the chapter. We need to be sure that the president is blind.

We are the National Federation of the Blind and not the National Federation for the Blind-. For members of the general public it is important that they know we are blind people speaking for ourselves-hence the term (of the blind).

The month before elections we should call a board meeting to discuss membership-to review our membership to make sure that the majority of our members are blind.

We should make sure that we are in compliance with the NFBV and the NFB national constitution.

We should table this discussion until our September 2025 meeting.

## Other Items of Interest

### White Cane Awareness

The Winchester Host Lions Club is working with Ronnie Lewis, the Chief of Police in Winchester city and with Les Veach, the Mayor of Winchester city to hold a White Cane day sometime in October. There are approximately 700 blind people, who live in Winchester city. We would like to discuss audible traffic signals and to look at where accidents have occurred to see if installing some audible traffic signals might prevent some of these pedestrian accidents.

### Fall Ramp Up

Access Independence is having its Fall Ramp Up event on September 6 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

## Assistive Technology Demonstration

Bill Turkel and Rodney Neely have set up an assistive technology demonstration at

West Minster Canterbury on Wednesday, September 24, 2025 at 1:00 PM until 2:00 Pm. Julie Akers, President of Ability2Access will be our featured presenter. She will have some portable magnifiers and a state of the art reading machine that she will demonstrate for people. There will also be some time for people to ask questions and to have some hands on time with the machines.

### Community Service Volunteers

The Morman Church is having a Community Service Volunteer outreach event

on September 25, 2025

### Frederic County social collective

The Frederic County Social Collective will have a coffee on September 24, 2025 from 10:00 AM until 12:00 PM. This might be a good opportunity for some of us to go to learn more about this organization and to exchange contact information etc.

### Bond Information

The bond information was submitted. We have not heard back from the state.

## Adjournment

The August 30, 2025 board meeting of the Winchester Federation of the Blind adjourned at 11:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rodney Neely, Recording Secretary

Winchester Federation of the Blind