Minutes for the March 13, 2025 Meeting of the National Federation of the Blind of Washington Members at Large Chapter

Meeting began at 6:30pm

Robbie Nicholes presiding

Present Robbie Nicholes, Longview – Vice President

Natalie Charbonneau, Bellingham - Treasurer

Suzi Prows, Kirkland – Board Member

Ryan Palm, Longview – Board Member

Marci Carpenter, Seattle – NFBW President

Bennett Prows, Kirkland – NFBW Secretary

Bill Brown Bremerton

Chris - Tacoma

Jill Reasoner - Everette

Sam - long view

Sheri - Longview

Humberto - Shoreline

Jenelle - Leavenworth

Caterina - Longview

Jason Consolacion - Brooklyn

Tasha Budnick

Nikki Palm, President, and Kris Colcock, Secretary, were absent.

The Minutes of the February meeting were approved and adopted.

The Treasurer’s Report was given by Natalie. The ending balance in the bank account was $700.26 and the PayPal account ended the month with $19.40 giving a grand total of $719.66. paypal

Marci gave a state report. She reminded everyone to fill out the convention survey. She and Corey are looking for new locations for next year. They are looking in the Tacoma / SeaTac area. She updated everyone on the Medicare telehealth and shared that President Riccabono had posted a short video on the concerns around what is happening with the Department of Education. She talked about AER conference and that Chris Higley and Kris Colcock were setting up a table at the conference. She also shared that Justin Harford and Kris Colcock were giving a presentation on the NFB BELL Academy opportunity. She reminded the chapter that the STEM2YOU event happens on May 3rd and that anyone interested in volunteering needs to let Chris Higley know and attend the mandatory training at the WTTBL on April 26. She also talked about the upcoming NFB National convention being held in New Orleans, LA this summer. The Jernigan Scholarships for first time attendees was mentioned and she also said that financial assistance applications for the NFBW would be coming out soon.

Suzi gave a legislative report. She talked about the March 20th Zoom Seminar for legislative issues. She shared information about HR 1175 – Blind Americans Return to work act introduced by Congressman Pete sessions and Congressman Kweisi Mfume introduced the bill . She also talked about HR 1529 the Access Technology Affordability Act was introduced by Congressman Mike Kelly and Congressman mike Thompson. She encouraged everyone to call their representatives and have them support the bill.

In the area of state legislation, she talked about the bill that would eliminate the requirement for a valid driver’s license when applying for a job that does not require driving. That bill number is HB 1042 and the Senate Bill is 5511. She also shared that there is a bill being introduced that will help fund the state library system and in turn the WTBBL and we should ask our representatives to support that as well. The legislative hotline is 800-562-6000. They will help you figure out who your legislator is if you don’t know. This is especially important as the funding for the state library has dropped due to a lower housing market.Watch for legislative alrts on listservs

Next the chapter talked about their favorite part of the state convention. What did you like and how can it be better. Robbie is fibbing about mosh pits and stick wars at the convention so that his sighted co-workers will attend. Sam suggested flash mob for next years convention. At large rocked it winning prizes and Jason played beautifully at the banquet accompanied by Ryan Palm on drums, Bill won the raffle and many other members were pleased by wining door prizes. Ben was an amazing auctioneer

Bill enjoy the self defense classes and the cooking seminar

And the jam session. Sheri shared that she truly loved the Rayband smart glasses demonstration. Catarina also like the self defense and being able to hang out with friends. The cookies Corey made with the accessible toaster oven were appreciated and Ben forgot the hard boiled eggs that were made with the Instapot in the fridge at the hotel.

Marci shared the importance of Tracey’s speech and how impactful it was for a scholarship winner who is currently having a similar experience. Members shared how they enjoyed the random conversations that were had and overheard as they gave insight that others were having similar challenges. The feeling of community and shared experience is powerful and empowering. Ryan shared his experience of a toddler running to him and sitting in his lap while he was on the floor. The toddler’s parents are sighted but it is likely that the child will eventually lose their sight. The parents want to be proactive and decided to attend the convention to learn and understand. Robbie shared that he and Mandy had a conversation with a mother of a blind child. By attending the convention, the mother realized that their child has the ability to get things done, just in a different manner.

Jason shared that this was his first cross country trip where he was pretty much on his own from start to finish. His success and experiences were shared with others and he shared how empowering the experience was.

Marci shared that the auction raised a little over $1100 for the affiliate. Lots of discussion on the goodies that went into the baskets. Suggestions for taste testing the items before they go into the basket for next year.

Ryan shared how accessible the Cosori 13 in 1 toaster oven is. It is amazing how many things are accessible when the apps are also accessible. Tasha talked with a guid dog user who received their dog from SEEing Eyes. She is considering a guide dog and the conversation was helpful and informative.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm