Bay State Council of the Blind
Board call for march 12, 2017

List of officers and board members:

- Brian Charlson President
- David Kingsbury First Vice President
- Frank Ventura Second Vice President
- Jerry Berrier Secretary
- Rick Morin Treasurer
- Rose Miller board member
- Jim Denham board member
- Mary Haroyan board member
- Phill Fernandes board member

Ex Officio

- Steve Dresser Webmaster
- Bob Hachey BayLines editor
- DeAnn Elliott Legislative committee chair

President Brian Charlson called the meeting to order shortly after 7:30 Pm.

All were present except Bob and PJ.

The agenda was adopted by the group.

The minutes of our February meeting were approved.

Brian recommended that we authorize him to consult with larry Turnbull regarding website issues. No action was taken.

Rose joined the call at 7:54 PM.

Jerry volunteered to contact PJ to get login information to ensure that more than one person has full access to manage the BSCB website.
Next the board went into executive session to discuss personnel issues. Brian confirmed that as legislative chair, DeAnn is authorized to participate.

We had a brief discussion but no actions were taken.

Executive session ended.

**President’s report**

Brian updated us on BLIND day. He has coordinated plans with Paul Saner and Amy Ruell.

DeAnn will publicize the BSCB’s agreement with the Mass. Eye and Ear by linking the email she sends to the agreement and press release that are on Lainey Feingold’s website. David will coordinate with DeAnn for publicizing the announcement in Baylines Express.

**Treasurer’s report submitted by Rick Morin**

Rick had e-mailed a detailed report to us prior to the call and included the following summary:

1. Registration status; 174 people have paid their 2017 dues or stated their intent to pay their member-at-large dues or have been reported by chapters. Despite the addition of several new members, we are down from the 181 members reported last year. All those who paid 2016 dues and have not paid or promised to pay their 2017 dues have been contacted multiple times. We need to reach at least 175 members to not lose an affiliate vote at the National Convention.

2. The BSCB Student chapter reported only 4 members.

3. The CRC and GDUM chapters have been notified of the dues amount owed to BSCB. The South Shore Chapter has already remitted their dues to BSCB.

4. $851.06 was disbursed to the ACB National office to reimburse ACB for the costs of the BSCB scholarship winner attending last year’s ACB Convention.

Lane Waters has requested that the National office issue the award check to the BSCB awardee as done for all other state affiliates whose scholarships they manage.

5. The National office will reissue two checks previously issued to BSCB but never cashed ($24 MMS and $845 for share in Brenda Dillon Walk). The re-issued checks have not yet arrived and have not been included in this report.

6. We received an unexpected donation of $3372 from the United Way. This amount is included in this report.
7. Convention Registration Revenue received (including payment for T Shirts) thus far is: $4068.

8. Convention Sponsorships thus far total $1900 including $500 from Gerard Boucher who is unable to attend the convention this year.

9. We purchased a second Square Point of Sale system capable of accepting chip cards, normal swipe and contactless such as ApplePay. Cost is $210.

10. Total account balance is $154,057.

11. Cash flow is positive $8758.

12. BSCB Dues have not yet been paid to ACB.

13. Cost to put on the Convention at the Marriott is usually between $7000 - $10000.

14. I will publish the draft budget as discussed in the last board meeting after Member Certification is complete.

Frank made, Mary seconded and the board approved a motion to approve the treasurer’s report.

Executive session
We went into executive session to discuss issues related to our spring convention.

Brian made and Rick seconded a motion to request assistance from the Carroll Center with goody bags.

The motion carried with two opposing votes.

Executive session ended.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM. Below are committee reports graciously e-mailed in lieu of discussion on the call.

Publications Committee, submitted by David Kingsbury
The updated BSCB brochure is now finalized and will be posted on the Announce list just after the convention.

Social Committee, submitted by David Kingsbury
The Saturday March 4 lunch at the Corrib Pub in West Roxbury was cancelled due to lack of interest. The Social Committee may try to organize a similar event in the fall.

Upcoming spring events to be organized include a walk along the Charles River accessible nature trail in Watertown and a tour of the Gore Place in Waltham.
Several BSCB members have given guidance to Gore Place on how to mount accessible tours.

Volunteers have been requested from Boston Cares for the spring convention, but it is less than certain that any will be available.

Legislative report, Submitted by DeAnn Elliott

The Cambridge License Commission released a draft of its new taxi regulations and held a hearing on March 8th in Cambridge. DeAnn attended and spoke for about five minutes, presenting written comments. Dan Manning, our attorney, was not able to attend but looked over and approved of the written comments.

Michael Muehe, the Director of the Office for Persons with Disabilities also spoke, as did many taxi drivers.

In light of recent gains made by rideshare companies, The License Commission wants to make it more competitive to be a taxi driver. They’ve eliminated about 30 pages of regulations. Some of the regulations, however, benefit PWD. Hopefully, this will not be a trend in other cities.

The offending dog regulation was improved, although we made comments to further sharpen the language. We also expressed concern over a proposal to allow passengers to take any taxi in the cue rather than the first one, because it might encourage drivers to tell passengers with service animals to take the next taxi. Some drivers also object to this provision.

We also objected to proposals for new taxi markings. Under the old regulations, taxi medallion numbers had to be written in four inch letters on all four fenders of the vehicle. Under the new regulations, the lettering only has to be two inches high, and can be printed once on each side of the vehicle, anywhere.

We felt that it would be hard for a passenger with low vision to identify a moving vehicle well enough to report service violations to the hackney division.

Many other similar concerns were raised in our written comments.

Dan Manning will contact DeAnn this week to discuss next steps. The License Commission has not given a date for the release of the final regulations.
The Legislative Seminar in Washington D.C. was very successful, and resulted in many face-to-face meetings with Congressmen, including Ed Markey, Joseph Kennedy, and Michael Capuano. The ACB is optimistic that blindness is a bipartisan issue that both parties can hopefully agree on, and passage would give elected officials a chance to offer concrete gains to constituents. We strategized about making headway for blinded veterans and eye research in light of the interest in increasing the budget of the Department of Defense. There were panel discussions featuring speakers from the FCC and Department of Transportation.

If you attended the seminar, please take a moment to fill out your Hill Visit form (this year as a Survey Monkey questionnaire) as soon as possible if you haven’t yet submitted it.

The legislative committee is working to prepare a 40-minute panel discussion for the spring BSCB conference. We are also working with the resolutions committee to finalize some items that can be voted on at the conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Berrier, Secretary