Bay State Council of the Blind
Board call on May 15, 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
- Carey Scouler board member

Ex Officio

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

Brian called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 PM.

All officers and board members were present except for Rose Miller, and Jerry Berrier who was excused due to a conflict.

The minutes of our April meeting were approved.

Jim reminded that once minutes are approved, they are to be sent to the BSCB-announce list.

Treasurer’s report

As usual, Rick had sent a detailed report with supporting documents to the board prior to the call, along with this summary:

- Total Treasury balance is $146,062.46
- Net Income as of May 15, 2017 is +$763.66
- All National Dues have been paid
• National Convention Stipends have not been paid yet
• State and Federal Tax Reports have been filed. Tax Prep Fee of $1000 has not been paid yet.
• All Vehicle Donation reports have been filed
• Includes all convention expenses including full cost of hospitality Suite
• Finance Committee headed by Jerry Berrier has met with Financial Advisor and Jerry has submitted report and recommendations of next steps.
• National Office is now handling all tasks surrounding the BSCB Scholarship, including issuing the award check
• BSCB Students Checking account has been established. $200 in seed money transferred by BSCB to BSCBS

Rick made and Mary seconded a motion to split the cost of the hospitality suite with Frank, even though Frank had generously offered to pay the full cost. The motion carried with no opposition and one abstention.

Frank reminded us that several years ago we passed a motion to strive for a balanced budget for our annual convention. We accomplished that this year thanks to sponsorships and other related revenue.

Brian suggested and the board agreed to devote our June meeting solely to discussion of the draft budget Rick included with his treasurer’s report.

Rick asked us all to review the updated members list and let him know of any errors.

Rick will correct errors on the spreadsheet related to congressional districts.

Frank made, Jim and other seconded, and the board passed a motion to approve the treasurer’s report.

President’s report
Brian has been in regular contact with Commissioner Saner and has received updates regarding budget and other issues of interest to us.

DeAnn congratulated us for the hard work related to our recent resolution requesting a $880,000 increase, but Brian relayed pessimism regarding the Senate’s support of any amount above the House-proposed $143,000 increase to the 1,000-account affecting social services.

Brian was temporarily knocked off the conference line.

Continuation of the President’s report

Brian said the MRC commissioner recently resigned and has been replaced by someone with a strong mental health background. The commissioner of DDS also recently tendered her resignation.

Legislative
The legislative committee has been working on follow-through for the various resolutions passed by the BSCB at its spring convention. Specifically, the
joint resolution with the NFB has been widely distributed to our legislators, and advocates have been asked to call. DeAnn forwarded a copy of the resolution to create an office of health equity to Sen. Barrett’s office, and his aide was very grateful to the BSCB. DeAnn also submitted written testimony for the family bill, which was the subject of a resolution passed two years ago which would support parents with disabilities in divorce cases.

DeAnn plans to schedule a meeting within the next month with Mass Eye and Ear to discuss technology issues. She has added John Smith and Jeanette Kutash because they have had recent experience with Mass Eye and Ear. David has done a thorough report on the MEE website; DeAnn will present that at the meeting. Rick and DeAnn will talk about incorporating low-vision factors into the report. David will forward what has been written thus far to Rick.

DeAnn asked us to think of students who may be good candidates for the legislative committee; there has been no student representation on the committee in recent years. Carey expressed interest in supporting the committee’s work.

**Transportation**

Rick updated us on the evolving structure of the MBTA advisory panel.

He said while recent BSCB transportation committee activities have focused on the MBTA, the committee is aware they need to expand their reach outside the Boston area.

Mary updated us regarding recent public hearings in Worcester. The RTA will be increasing the cost of a paratransit ride by 50 cents, with additional increases planned in the future.

**BSCB Convention**

Frank said we had 60 conference registrants this year, approximately 5 less than last year.

The average ticket cost per person was $80.00. Actual cost per person was $176.00.

Because we have used the Marriott repeatedly, we incurred no expense for use of the meeting rooms.

There were a few complaints about difficulty hearing the banquet speaker over the ambient noise, and a few who came only on Saturday regretted that there were no goody bags, as they had hoped to eat the goodies in lieu of a meal.

Frank stated the head counts for some of the meetings. Approximately 17 people attended the guide dog users meeting, but of those only 7 or 8 were registered for the convention.

He also noted that only a third of our members attended the convention.

Jim moved that we create a Survey Monkey survey to get feedback from those who have attended as well as comments from those who have not. He suggested we raffle a $25 gift certificate as incentive to complete the survey. David seconded the motion. David suggested an ad hoc be committee be charged with writing the survey, and he volunteered to participate. Jim volunteered to set up the survey on the web. The motion carried unanimously.

Brian appointed Frank, Mary, Jim and David; Jim will chair the committee.
Brian commended the convention committee and said this convention seemed to have gone exceptionally well.

Frank has agreed to chair the 2018 convention committee.

Potential locations will be evaluated by Frank, Brian and Rick.

Jim suggested the committee try to negotiate better hotel room rates for next year.

David suggested that, due to time constraints, we hold our 2018 convention at the Burlington Marriott. In the meantime, the committee can be considering other potential locations for 2019.

Frank moved that we begin negotiations with the Marriott to hold the 2018 convention there. David seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**Publications**

Steve posted the April BayLines Express to our website, and he is working on a method to improve formatting.

Once he can resolve issues with headings and other formatting when documents are pushed to the website, he will add current BayLines editions.

Gretchen was not available at the April publications committee meeting, but she will be at the May meeting to discuss the logo.

The committee is also working on better management of BSCB documentation.

Mary suggested and Steve agreed that it would be good to capture more information when a person registers on the website. Currently it only asks for name and e-mail address.

Bob said the spring-summer edition of BayLines is slated for publication by June 10.

**Membership**

Mary said an open meeting will be held in Worcester on June 3 to assess interest in reviving the Worcester chapter of BSCB. Kim and Brian will speak at the meeting. Frank will hold a meeting in Boston on June 17 to promote a Boston chapter.

Bonnie Adams and Kathy Devin are promoting a diabetes special interest group.

Diana Leonard is representing the students group on the membership committee.

**Social**

The recent students movie night was a success, and they now plan to hold a picnic on June 10, to which we are all invited.

David expressed disappointment that only two people have signed up for the nature walk scheduled for May 20. He has tentative plans for a visit to Gore Place later in the summer.

Bob will include information about the social committee in the next BayLines.
Brian asked Jim to send out a post to CRC members about the nature walk, since the CRC meeting is that afternoon.

**National Convention**

David made and Mary seconded a motion that Brian be appointed as our delegate, Frank as alternate, and Steve as representative on the nominating committee. The motion carried unanimously.

They will be given stipends at the same rate as last year, despite significant increases in the cost of air travel.

Brian suggested and the group seemed to agree that we will purchase a package of 3 Amazon Echo Dots to be donated as one prize to the ACB auction, at a cost of approximately $150.00.

Mary made and Carey seconded a motion that we as the board donate $200 to the upcoming Carroll Center Walk for Independence. The motion carried unanimously.

Our next call is scheduled for Sunday June 11 at 7:30 PM and will be devoted solely to discussing the proposed budget.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:10 PM.

Respectfully,

Jerry Berrier, secretary