

Bay State Council of the Blind

Board call on August 4, 2019

Bay State Council of the Blind 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

Dianna Leonard board member

Cheryl Cumings board member

Mary Haroyan board member

Ex Officio

Steve Dresser Webmaster

Bob Hachey BayLines editor

DeAnn Elliott Legislative committee chair

Brian brought the call to order at approximately 7:34 PM. All officers and board members were present, along with Sharon Strzalkowski, Ann Donna, DeAnn Elliott, Jessica Barr, and Daisy Russell. Ex officio Bob Hachey was present. Steve Dresser was excused.

The minutes of our last board call were approved.

We discussed ongoing issues with the ACB e-mail lists. We will stop using them until the problems are solved.

Jerry will send a list of BSCB board e-mail addresses to the board, officers and chapter presidents.

Treasurer's report; Rick.

Along with Profit and Loss as of August 4, 2019 and Asset Balances as of August 4, 2019 reports, rick provided the following:

(Written report)

Please take note of the following financial highlights:

The President's Team met its goal at the Annual Brenda Dillon Memorial walk at the 2019 National Convention in Rochester. BSCB is expected to receive over \$5000 as proceeds from the generous donations the match the President's team received. This money has not yet been received and is not booked.

As this was Kim's last year as President, I move that the board consider recognizing Kim at our Fall Meeting to thank her for her generous support of BSCB, be it financial and her outstanding record of success that we have benefited from for a long time.

We won the \$500 prize in the Braille Forum Raffle.

Our liquid assets total \$34,902.05.

We are showing a year to date loss of -3,489.13.

We disbursed \$1350 to our accountant for tax preparation.

Annual Premium in the amount of \$1,040 has been paid to renew our Directors and Officers Insurance Policy

Annual Premium in the amount of \$1,318 has been paid to renew our General Liability Insurance Policy

I purchased a refurbished high powered computer from Tech Soup for \$480 to allow me to edit the convention recording and perform my work more quickly. I am reimbursing BSCB for this and have already repaid \$200.

The Legal Seafood Gift Certificate we donated to the national convention auction was won by Ray Campbell.

(End of written report)

Frank made, Jerry seconded, and the board approved a motion to pay for the computer Rick purchased specifically for BSCB use.

The treasurer's report was approved by a motion.

President's report; Brian

Brian attended the Boston chapter meeting yesterday. He praised Frank for an excellent meeting and great turn-out.

Brian recently provided census information requested by Cynthia VanWinkle in the national office in Minnesota. He commented that Cynthia would be an excellent speaker for one of our future conventions.

Larry Turnbull was recently off on a medical leave.

Legislative report; DeAnn

(Written report)

June 26, DeAnn attended meeting organized by U.S. Attorney's Office at the Federal Courthouse in Boston Organized to reach out to Massachusetts disability consumer advocacy organizations. They provided handouts, offered to speak at events, offered assistance with advocacy strategy.

Spoke to Advocacy director at DLC about meeting to set priorities, but need seems resolved.

July 16 Talked to representative Katie Campbell Simons of Mass. Census Equity Fund. Census is going digital, and a hard copy card will be sent out. I recommend we reach out to DLC to see if we might amplify their message.

Had a conference call with Cheryl Cumings and a BSCB member about possible grant funding. Maybe set up a grant committee?

DeAnn served on resolutions committee for ACB convention. Resolutions to be posted soon on ACB website. For NFB resolutions, visit: <https://nfb.org/resources/speeches-and-reports/resolutions/2019-resolutions>

August 1 was release date for 2019/2020 Common College Application, which was accessible! Good work to David Kingsbury, Bruce Howell, attorney Matt Handley and BSCB committee members who worked on this project! Next steps?

Got email from Brendan Burger at Sen. Barrett's office about a hearing on the creation of a state office of Health Care Equity. Wrote back to him and thanked him.

Mass. Eye and Ear is testing a new website. On July 25, David Kingsbury represented BSCB as a test participant. Accessibility is being handled by Perkins.

Greater Boston Legal Services wrote to DeAnn to ask for a presentation to their employees about blindness. December 13 confirmed.

Gov. Baker signed state FY20 budget last week on July 31st. Thank you message to supporters?

The legislative committee is willing to provide an afternoon workshop on advocacy issues at the fall conference, if the board decides it would like to offer it.

Next meeting of legislative committee is scheduled for August 7. The legislative committee will need to know the date, time and location of the fall conference as soon as possible to begin making concrete plans.

(End of written report)

We discussed many of the issues listed above.

Regarding the upcoming census, Brian said the Perkins library may apply for a grant and collaborate with other blindness entities to reach out to the blindness community. DeAnn said the DLC may also apply, and she feels it would be great if we could collaborate with one of the grant recipients. She will reach out to Kim Charlson to express our interest.

Sharon suggested that Council Connection do a segment on the census when the time is right.

There was general agreement that TC Breazeale is a great resource whose expertise in fund-raising and grant writing we should avail ourselves of, as she has offered to assist.

David pointed out that our spring convention needs funding much more than our fall conference.

Rose recommended we form a grants committee comprised of TC, Cheryl Cumings, and a few other BSCB folks with relevant experience.

DeAnn and Cheryl will talk with TC to gather some ideas relative to grants, fund-raising, and the like, and they will invite TC to speak to the board at our next call under Old Business.

Regarding the now-accessible College App, DeAnn will let Matthew Hanley know of the improvements. She will then confirm with the original complainants that the outcome is acceptable.

Pending their agreement, she will draft a letter of thanks to forward to Matthew Handley and ask him to consider sending it to those responsible for the improvements. At that point she will also make the ACB office aware of the changes.

When the time is right, we will want to make a big announcement to consumers. DeAnn expressed gratitude to all who worked very hard on this initiative. Bob recommended a press release from ACB announcing it.

Transportation; Rick

Rick had nothing to report.

David serves on the RTAG sub-committee. He recommends that the head of the Ride Pilot be invited to their September meeting. He hopes to discuss and recommend improvements to how monthly ride allocations are determined. He also said the committee has not yet been asked to provide input on new software being implemented by the Ride.

Jerry will research and send contact information for consumer issues and complaints.

(Post-meeting note: RTAG, <https://www.mbta.com/rtag>, 617-222-3200. There is an online e-mail form on the website.)

Mary reported that the RTA budget is in line with what was requested.

Membership; Mary

Rafael Toro has booked a room in the West Springfield library for the meeting planned for September 28. Mary hopes to attend.

The members-at-large conference call held in June was sparsely attended, but those who participated seemed to enjoy it. Mary will schedule another call in the future.

Social committee; Rose

The story slam in June was a success.

A Duck Tour is being planned.

Fall Conference; David

We agreed on a date of November 16 at the Carroll Center for our fall conference.

As it was last year, the fall conference committee will include David, Mary, Rose, Jerry, and Bob.

The legislative committee will take the lead for the afternoon program which will focus on advocacy. Brian asked that we include self-advocacy.

We will hold a 50-50 raffle.

We will invite the MCB commissioner to say a few words at the conference. This will not preclude inviting him to our spring convention.

Spring convention; Frank

He thanked Jerry for creating a Google Forms survey. However we ran into problems filling out the survey with JAWS.

Survey Monkey works okay for filling out surveys, but the creation part is inaccessible with a screen reader.

Dianna volunteered to create the Survey Monkey survey for us, and after some discussion we agreed to have her do that. While using an inaccessible product goes against our grain, the need is strong to get the survey done.

DeAnn suggested that we consider writing a letter about Survey Monkey to Matt Hanley once the College App initiative is complete.

Jerry made, Dianna seconded, and the board approved a motion to proceed with the Survey Monkey version.

Frank emphasized the need to get the survey out as soon as possible.

Jerry will e-mail the Google version to Dianna, and Dianna will request Survey Monkey credentials from Rick.

Publications; David

Philmore has not been working properly for close to 3 months. Several members suggested that we request a refund for that time period and consider eliminating Philmore if nothing can be done quickly to remedy the ongoing problems.

Sharon suggested that we put a note on ACB Leadership asking what similar services other states are using.

David and Bob have login information, which they will provide to Rick. He will then see what can be done.

New Business

Mary recommended that we create a strong policy governing stipends and responsibilities for our delegate and alternate delegate. She feels that both should be given a relatively equal stipend.

Cheryl expressed regret that we voted to only pay the primary delegate, and she suggested we revise how delegates are chosen.

Brian asked Mary to create a first draft to bring before the board. She may request assistance from whomever she wishes.

DeAnn and David suggested she include the legislative seminar in this initiative.

On another topic, we discussed how members might get access to contact information for other members. There was significant disagreement on how to handle this. The membership committee will discuss it at their next meeting.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday September 8 at 7:30 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully,

Jerry Berrier, Secretary