

## Bay State Council of the Blind

Board minutes for August 8, 2021

### Bay State Council of the Blind Officers and Board Members

- David Kingsbury President
- Frank Ventura First Vice President
- Cheryl Cumings Second Vice President
- Brian Charlson past president
- Jerry Berrier Secretary
- Rick Morin Treasurer
- Rose Miller board member
- Mary Haroyan board member
- Rafael Toro board member

### Ex Officio

- Steve Dresser webmaster
- DeAnn Elliott legislative chair

David called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM on August 8, 2021. All officers and board members were present, except Rose Miller and Rick Morin, both of whom had conflicts.

Also in attendance were Sharon Strzalkowski, Jessica Barr, and Nick Corbett. (Nick left the meeting at approximately 8:00 PM.)

The minutes of our June board meeting were approved. (We did not meet in July.)

### Treasurer's report

(Written report)

Dear Fellow BSCB Board members,

Attached please find the customary Profit and Loss Report as of today as well as the Total Asset Balance for our Treasury. (Emailed to the board prior to our meeting.)

list of 7 items

- The major expenses this period were for our Directors and Officer and General Liability Insurance policies. The liability Insurance cost us \$1523. We paid the first of 3 installment payments on the D and O policy of \$383.60. The remaining 2 installments were paid today but are not booked yet.
- Our tax returns are being prepared and that expense will likely hit in September.
- The Brenda Dillon Memorial Walk will close at the end of August and we will receive several thousand dollars in proceeds from Kim Charlson's Walk Team,
- Our total Treasury Balance is \$44,486.
- All the BSCB account credentials have been placed in a shared Lastpass folder that I sent Nick an invitation to. This will give Nick immediate full access to all account login credentials.
- Nick and I are in the process of scheduling our turnover meetings. This will include scheduling appointments at Bank of America to add Nick and David Kingsbury as signors on our accounts and removing myself and Brian Charlson.
- My hope is that this be the last report I file as BSCB Treasurer and that Nick becomes Treasurer and produces all future reports,

list end

Respectfully submitted

Rick Morin

Treasurer, Bay State Council of the Blind

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(End of written report)

Nick said he has received login credentials from Rick.

Brian informed us that we will receive \$7500 from the recent ACB walk, thanks to a generous donor who matched fund contributed for BSCB.

Nick asked that we copy him on any relevant emails we send to Rick.

### President's report; David

David had nothing to report, but Brian and Mary updated us regarding the recent ACB convention.

Only 18 BSCB members voted. Two votes were too late to be counted, but they would not have changed the outcome.

There will be a special ACB Zoom meeting later this month to discuss virtual voting, followed by a vote on new election procedures.

### Publications committee; Sharon

(Written report)

August 5, 2021

All committee members were present.

The third Thursday presentation for this month is still in process, and Sharon will be speaking with Chris Devin today to see if he can present about Internet radio and how to receive it in various forms. We mutually agreed that since Sharon had not heard back from Judy Dixon about doing a call on depositing checks via iPhone, we would let go of it. It is a complicated business and not many would be prone to use it.

Myra continues to seek Baylines Express articles. She has one from Cheryl Cumings and another from Sharon ready to be used. A couple of other ideas were discussed.

The committee feels fairly certain that the decision was made to offer credentials for our BSCB zoom account if someone in the organization needs to use them for BSCB business. Sharon is willing to put out an announcement saying that anyone seeking them should contact her. Confirmation from the board about this matter would be appreciated.

Following is a discussion of setting up a dropbox account for BSCB. First are comments to the committee from David:

BSCB Secretary Jerry should create a Dropbox account. He will need to figure out how he is going to regularly access this account. Assuming he does not want to put it on his own computer, he should know how to access it online to deal with sharing issues. Perhaps initially, a free account should be created.

Each committee should give a list of folders they attend to create in the BSCB Dropbox folder, as well as estimated initial size of their committee folder.

At this point, our active committees are Legislative, Publications, Membership, Social and Spring Convention. The Treasurer will also need a folder. Committees that exist "in name only" should not be included. Current Pubs Committee folders are: Board

Minutes; Brochure; Feature articles; Logo Files; Meeting Agendas and Notes; Official Correspondence; Personal and Back Office; Philmore; Press Releases; and Web Content;spaceCurrent Pubs Committee folder size is 33 MB. If we see that estimated total folder size is well below 2 GB (size of a free account), there is no need, at least initially, to sign up for a paid account. For any committee that thinks it will need a large amount of space, they will need to address the question of how their own members, most of whom are presumably only using a free 2 GB account, will access their committee folder if it is large.

All committee members should be granted editing status. Any committee members who want access will need to have a personal Dropbox account.

Each committee chair (or a member who knows how to initiate a folder sharing invitation) should invite members to share. The BSCB Secretary (or rather the email address for the Dropbox account) should also be invited to share the folder as this is the only way it can be included in the BSCB Dropbox folder.

The BSCB President should also be invited to share each committee folder. We should think about organizing a Zoom call at some point to train people on how to use Dropbox.

Jerry has set up a free account of two gigabytes for BSCB  
atspacejblists@gmail.com.spaceMore information will be forthcoming.

Steve reported that as administrator of our Word Press account, he has noticed some 700 people listed in it, most of them without names. He removed them all, and we all wondered if this is some kind of bot infestation. He will try to reach the tech support to report this and find out if there is any way that we can eliminate this from happening. This account is used when uploading any content to our website.

Sharon will take over as official person for Philmore, as bob Hachey had fulfilled that role. This is simply a mutual contacting case there are questions about the account from us or him.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Strzalkowski

(End of written report)

Chris Devin will speak about internet radio on our next Third Thursday meeting

After a lengthy discussion of how we might best use Dropbox for our official records, it was agreed that Brian, Frank, David, Steve, and Jerry will meet via Zoom to flesh out a policy to be discussed at our next board meeting. Sharon will send a note to committee chairs and chapter presidents inviting them to reach out to her if they need to use our Zoom account for BSCB meetings. David will coordinate scheduling.

Legislative report; DeAnn  
(Written report)

Legislative Committee Report

August 2021

Governor Charlie Baker signed the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget into law on July 16th. This \$47.6 billion plan is designed to support communities, schools, families, small businesses, and workers as Massachusetts emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of advocacy from consumers who are blind, the budget includes an earmark for \$850,000 in the community services account for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB,) that will be used to fund accessible equipment, adaptive technology, and computer /social rehabilitation(SR) training. The MCB budget also includes an additional \$850,000 in SR funding above what was originally proposed, as well as \$850,000 in funding for the Radio Reading Service and the Talking Information Center. This is great news! We anticipate pent-up demand for services after the COVID-19 pandemic. Many thanks to the advocates who worked hard on this issue, to BSCB members who made calls to their Senators, and to our legislators for their generous support of our community!

BSCB signed on to a letter from the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), the American Council of the Blind (ACB), and Justice in Aging that was sent to the Social Security Administration concerning a new policy that would impact recipients who had previously requested communication in alternative formats.

A response is requested from them by August 9, 2021. The letter asks Social Security to rescind its new policy and continue to provide accessible communication to those that have already requested it.

The ACB resolutions committee has received a very large number of draft resolutions (35) this year. Ideas introduced by BSCB members include proposals to provide ACB communication in Spanish, improve the accessibility of Quickbooks software, create more scholarship opportunities for students who are blind and who are pursuing part-time study, improve the appointment process to state rehabilitation councils, and express ACB concern about web accessibility overlays. Once again, due to COVID, the ACB board will vote on the resolutions. The board will meet twice—once on August 31 and again on September 29.

Resolutions committee calls are open to all members who would like to participate.

The BSCB's five-year structured negotiation agreement with the Massachusetts Eye and Ear expired on July 31, 2021. On July 27, BSCB and MEE's negotiating teams met by Zoom to discuss the agreement and to explore next steps. The meeting was attended by our attorneys from Greater Boston Legal Services, as well as MEE's legal representative. Although the written agreement itself was a step forward and some

progress has been made, particularly in the availability of sighted assistance and in the accessibility of the website, the implementation has been inconsistent. Patients who are blind continue to receive communication in inaccessible formats, encounter signage without braille, experience inappropriate sighted guide assistance, etc. Both sides expressed interest in continuing the dialogue, which could be done with or without a formal agreement. Although the agreement( posted on the BSCB website) has expired, the hospital is still committed to providing the services outlined there. BSCB Members who are patients at Mass Eye and Ear should be aware that they will still be able to express their preferred format to the hospital in advance of their appointment, request materials in braille, large print and electronic formats, independently complete fillable PDF forms online, listen to recordings of common hospital forms by telephone, etc. Lapses can be reported directly to the hospital through the Mass Eye and Ear website. If BSCB decides to continue to meet with the hospital in the absence of a formal agreement, our attorneys have advised BSCB to put something in writing to keep future conversations structured. If any member is interested in working on the project, please contact David Kingsbury.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is conducting a return on investment (ROI) study to assess the effectiveness of its vocational rehabilitation programs. Several focus groups have been held, and BSCB members have participated. The final report is expected in September.

In July and August, BSCB worked with the Disability Law Center(DLC) to discuss next steps in support of accessible absentee voting in Massachusetts. This was the subject of legal action in 2020 in which BSCB, DLC, the Boston Center for Independent Living and other advocates secured the right to an accessible digital ballot. Unfortunately, recent legislation did not make these improvements permanent, so more work may be necessary. In July, two members connected with DLC to explore involvement, and DeAnn made some short recordings to demonstrate accessibility barriers encountered by a voter using JAWS to request an absentee ballot.

August 1st was the release date for the Common App for the 2021-2022 academic year. Members might recall that the Common App was the subject of BSCB advocacy three years ago. The Common App is a platform Used by three million applicants, teachers, and counselors each year to streamline the college application process to 950 colleges and universities. BSCB has been pleased that the Common App has been accessible during the last two years. This year, a blog post from the Common App stated that the new release includes, "updated questions and tools designed to both expand access and facilitate a more equitable, inclusive college application process." We continue to monitor each release for accessibility and will look at this year's release soon. The Medical Device Nonvisual Accessibility Act (H.R. 4853) was introduced in the United States House of Representatives on Thursday, July 29. The bill was introduced by Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL). This legislation calls upon the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to promulgate nonvisual accessibility standards for Class II and

Class III medical devices with digital displays. This standard would apply to devices such as glucometers, sleep apnea machines, blood pressure monitors, thermometers, and oximeters. The bill is designed to meet the goal of having full access to all features of a device. We have reached out to the ACB national office to coordinate an approach for our affiliate.

Respectfully submitted by DeAnn Elliott

(End of written report)

Mass Eye and Ear: DeAnn expressed a desire to step away from her leadership role as an advocate at MEE. David praised her for her many years of advocacy at MEE. DeAnn said we need a new champion who uses MEE services and is passionate about accessibility. This will be discussed further by David and others.

### Social committee report; Rose

(Written report)

The social team has not met since our travel social hang out event in June.

We will meet later in the fall around the end of September over Zoom.

Thank you,

Rose M. Miller

(End of written report)

### Membership committee report; Cheryl

(Written report)

list of 2 items

1. The membership Committee will hold its first meeting in September.
2. I received the credentials needed to access the national membership database and plan to take Mary up on her offer for some training.

list end

3. president's of all state chapters were contacted and asked to designate someone to be part of the membership committee.

(End of written report)

David and Cheryl will request training to learn to use the ACB membership database.

David will send a letter to ACB requesting a list of MA residents who registered for the ACB convention but did not vote.

Cheryl said we need to work on member retention.

One possible way to promote interaction is to hold competitive BSCB member walks in various parts of the state.

Old business

Bob Hachey Scholarships:

Points made included the following:

We will offer a \$4,000 scholarship in the next cycle, possibly \$5,000 in future years.

Amount for a part-time student would be pro-rated.

We want ACB to manage it.

The recipient must attend the ACB convention, and they should also plan to attend the next BSCB convention.

Recipient will be required to summarize the convention they attended.

We may want to assign a BSCB mentor for the recipient.

For future years, we will need to do some fund raising to continue the scholarship, and we should assign a BSCB member to manage this.

The recipient should be added as an ACB member and BSCB member.

Brian made the following motion:

send a letter to ACB stating we wish to offer a single \$4,000 scholarship in the next cycle, to be managed by ACB.

The recipient may be a full-time or part-time student. (We need to clarify what part-time means)

The recipient must reside in Massachusetts.

The recipient must attend the next ACB convention, and they should also try to attend the next BSCB convention.

Sharon seconded the motion, and the board approved it.

New business

Future BSCB meetings:



We discussed holding a virtual election, in light of the ongoing pandemic and our business needs.

Brian made and Jerry seconded a motion to hold a virtual election at our 2021 fall conference. The motion was approved with one dissenting vote.

David will reach out to Chris Devin regarding our constitution.

Jerry will contact potential Boston University volunteers to ask them to assist with our 2021 election of officers.

Mary made and Brian seconded a motion to hold virtual conferences in fall 2021 and spring 2022, and plan to hold an in-person convention in the fall of 2022. The motion was approved.

Mary will coordinate a virtual one-day fall conference to be held in November 2021.

Frank agreed to coordinate the spring 2022 and fall 2022 conferences.

Our next board meeting is scheduled for September 12 2021 at 7:30 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully,

Jerry Berrier, Secretary