

Bay State Council of the Blind

Board minutes for December 13, 2020

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

Cheryl Cumings board member

Mary Haroyan board member

Ex Officio

Steve Dresser Webmaster

DeAnn Elliott Legislative committee chair

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM. All officers and board members were present. Also in attendance were Sharon Strzalkowski, Jessica Barr, Rafael Toro, and Nick Corbett.

The agenda was adopted as presented.

Steve made, Rose seconded, and the board approved a motion to accept the minutes of our November meeting.

Treasurer's report; Rick

Along with detailed spreadsheets, Rick provided the following:

(Written report)

Dear fellow BSCB Board Members,

Financial Highlights:

list of 9 items

1. We are enjoying a net gain of \$1,998.37 Year to date as of today. No further large disbursements expected between now and Year End.
2. Total asset balance (excluding investments) is \$43,457.32

3. Current Investment Value: \$107,325.89
4. Received chapter dues payments from CRC (\$318) and GDUM (partial)
5. Domain Name has been renewed for 5 years
6. Convention Registration Refund check to CJ Posk returned as uncashed (\$115)
7. \$225 Donation made to the ACB Radio auction
8. Initial meeting was held with Nick Corbett who is interested in and qualified to assume treasurer responsibilities. I was to obtain a Quickbooks license from Techsoup for Nick but am unable to. Techsoup only allows one donation per year from Intuit. Assessing options to move forward. Past reports have been shared with Nick who demonstrated his abilities to understand the reports when we met.
9. 2021 Dues/Certification cycle will begin in January and Nick will assist in this process

list end

As always, the BSCB books are available for inspection by Board members upon request.

(End of written report)

Rick said he and David and Brian held a fruitful discussion with Nick Corbett to discuss treasurer duties.

GDUM still owes BSCB for chapter dues. They hope to make a full payment soon. Mary lamented that this has taken over 8 months.

Ric, David and Steve discussed whether we may be missing needed login information for our website; Rick confirmed he has all of the login information.

Brian recommended that one of us keep a calendar to track when time-sensitive things need to be done during the year, but no decision was made regarding who would manage the calendar.

Mary made, Steve seconded, and the board approved a motion to accept the treasurer's report.

President's report; Brian

We discussed our thoughts regarding the recent MCB RC meeting.

Claire Stanley has moved on to another position.

Publications report; David

The committee proposed that we discontinue BayLines.

Myra Ross will coordinate adding a monthly feature article to BayLines Express.

Steve will produce a .brf copy each month, and BayLines express will be added to Philmore.

Committee members will reach out to the small number of members who have no email access and confirm how they can best receive BayLines Express.

Jerry made, Mary seconded, and the board approved a motion to add enhancements to BayLines Express and discontinue publication of BayLines.

David said Brian is writing the first feature article, which is due by December 21.

The committee proposed that we hold topical Zoom calls at 8:00 PM on the third Thursday of each month, starting January 21. The social committee will organize the first call. The publications committee will play a supportive role for the calls, but they will not manage the content.

Mary made, Rose seconded, and the board approve a motion to hold monthly Zoom calls.

We discussed who should have access to the BSCB membership list.

Rick made and Jerry seconded a motion to give access to all BSCB officers, with other members given access on a need-to-know basis. The BSCB secretary would manage access to the list.

Cheryl made and Rose seconded a parliamentary motion to table further discussion of this topic until our next meeting. Jerry will search the BSCB minutes for details of a discussion of this issue that board members seem to recall. The motion carried; there was one opposing vote.

Legislative report; DeAnn

(Written report)

Dec. 13, 2020

The BSCB survey about the accessibility of the 2020 election process was conducted in November and December. Thanks go to Cheryl Cumings for designing

and circulating the survey through Google forms. Although the deadline for responding has passed, the legislative committee plans to distribute the link

again, to see if a few more responses might be collected.

At the quarterly meeting of the MCB Rehabilitation Council on December 2nd, Jerry Berrier represented BSCB and expressed the organization's concerns about

the plan to close the MCB's Worcester and New Bedford offices. In particular, he expressed disappointment over the lack of transparency and emphasized

the importance of providing equal service to clients in all parts of the Commonwealth.

Several consumers, including BSCB President Brian Charlson commented. Comments included an observation that the MCB was nearly level-funded for FY 2021,

the two offices represent half of MCB's footprint, and Worcester is the second largest city in New England. Hardcopy client records shouldn't be stored

in private homes, and private meeting space is often needed for client meetings. It's beneficial to keep recently unemployed consumers connected to the

workforce.

At a meeting of the MCB Statutory Advisory Board (SAB) on December 4th, the SAB chair said the lack of documentation made it impossible for the SABB to

have an informed opinion and to act on their responsibility to provide feedback to MCB due to the way in which the decision was reached and announced.

Commissioner D’Arcangelo responded that MCB has demonstrated during the COVID pandemic that rehabilitation services can be provided efficiently by other

means, that other MCB regions did not have a physical office space, that MCB employees wouldn’t need hardcopy client files in their homes, that the number

of clients who use the physical space did not warrant the extension of leases that had expired, and that savings from the rental of physical space would

mean more services to consumers in the future.

Several members of the public joined both meetings, as well as two staff members of state legislative offices. The regional offices are due to be closed

in January.

DeAnn and Cheryl are working on a response for Rep. Presley about the Online Accessibility Act. The response would provide background information and talking

points as the bill is being debated. We have several concerns. It will be forwarded to Brian Charlson in the next few days and we welcome comments.

Leadership/Legislative Seminar for 2021?

Legislation to establish a Permanent Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities was approved by both the Massachusetts House and Senate. It

was included in the broader policing reform bill. The Commission would comprise members of the legislature and executive branch agencies as well as the

private sector and advocacy community. The goal is to complement and amplify the work already being done in this space, elevate the public policy issues

of significance to persons with disabilities and ensure strong communication amongst the various public and private stakeholders. BSCB position?

A Federal court ruled that New York City discriminated against blind and low vision pedestrians by failing to make crosswalk signals accessible. There

was a good article about it in the New York Times that featured ACB members.

The MBTA’s comment period about proposed changes to service ended Dec. 4th.

Claire Stanley left the ACB Washington Office for another position on December 11. She will be missed.

(End of written report)

Cheryl will send us the link to the survey. She's pretty sure she sent it to the DPC and Carroll Center.

Brian said Kim has it but he's not sure whether it has gotten into a recent newsletter.

DeAnn will get the bill number for us for the online accessibility bill.

Spring conference report; Frank

The committee had a very fruitful meeting recently.

The convention will be virtual via Zoom and will be a 3-day event.

Responsibilities have been agreed upon by committee members.

Proposed dates are April 23-25, 2021.

Brian continues to peruse recent executive orders for any instruction on what business we can conduct virtually during the pandemic.

Frank made, Mary seconded, and the board approved a motion to accept the proposed plans.

Other business

Disposition of adaptive equipment belonging to Bob Hachey has not yet been resolved.

Jerry made, Rose seconded, and the board approved a motion to donate \$1,000 to the Disability law Center in gratitude for their assistance in recent times. Brian said, per a conversation Kim had with Jeff Thom, the ACB National Educational and Legal Defense Service (NELS) committee will reimburse us for the donation.

Secretary of health Sutters will hold a virtual town meeting to discuss plans for distribution of Covid19 vaccines; Brian said he will be invited to the meeting. Board members expressed the need of accessible documentation and instructions. Members agreed that age should not be an eligibility factor for nursing home residents.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Berrier, Secretary