

Bay State Council of the Blind

Board minutes for December 12, 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
- Nick Corbett; treasurer
- Rose Miller; board member
- Jennifer harnish; board member
- Pam Loch; board member
- Rafael Toro; board member

Ex Officio

- Steve Dresser; webmaster
- Sharon Strzalkowski; publications chair
- Dianna Leonard; BayLines Express editor
- DeAnn Elliott; advocacy committee chair

David called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 PM. All officers, ex officio officers, and board members were present. Others on the call included Jeanette Kutash; Boston chapter, and Chris Devin; south Shore.

The agenda was adopted.

The minutes of our November meeting were approved as amended.

[Treasurer's report; Nick](#)

Treasurer Nick Corbett emailed the report and associated documents to board members prior to this meeting.

(Written report)

Submitted on 12/10/2021

By: Nick Corbett, Treasurer

- All numbers are reported through the end of November 2021.

Priority Report Items

1. Year to date profit and loss and balance sheet reports are attached.
 - a. Income minus expenses = \$8,924.47
 - b. Total liquid assets = \$52,593.43, +0.01% since last month
 - c. Bank of America checking account = \$19,599.33
 - d. PayPal cash account = \$7,622.14
 - e. Bank of America savings account = \$25,371.96
2. The BSCB Fall Conference generated \$1,107.12 in sponsorships.
3. The Minnesota finance office has been notified of BSCB's transition to a new treasurer.
4. Seeking Rick's advice on transitioning BSCB bank accounts from Rick and Brian to Nick and David.
5. Follow up on confirming deletion of privately held treasurer data on president, past treasurer, and secretary's computers.
6. The treasurer@bscbfma.org Blue Host email account has been accessed; pending upon its web client functionality, this email might soon become the primary BSCB treasurer email account that will be tied to all treasurer managed accounts.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick

(End of written report)

Nick said he will reach out to Rick regarding a couple of operational questions.

After some discussion, it was agreed that we will continue to use BlueHost for some official BSCB email addresses, which have the acbofma.org suffix. Steve will offer assistance as needed.

Nick reiterated that all BSCB chapter dues have been paid.

Nick said the reimbursement from ACB for our donation to the DLC is in process. Brian explained that it related to a \$1,000 donation we made, which was to be reimbursed through the NELS fund by ACB.

We discussed a \$250.00 donation we made toward shipping costs for the ACB auction in 2020 and 2021. It was suggested that it be clearly shown in our budget.

A question arose regarding whether we had filed a report with the MA attorney general's office regarding our 501C3 status. Rick has previously stated that all tax and reporting information has been completed.

A motion was made and approved, with no opposition or abstentions, to reimburse Steve Dresser for two years of monthly \$20 payments he has made to Libsyn, the company that hosts our Council Connection podcast. Steve has been paying the charge while testing to confirm Libsyn is the right service for us. Future payments to Libsyn will be made by our treasurer.

The treasurer's report was accepted unanimously by a motion.

Nick will draft a budget, and David will schedule a budget meeting to be held soon after our January board meeting.

President's report; David

David welcomed Pam and Jennifer to the board.

He summarized the recent quarterly meeting he and the NFB of MA president had with MCB Commissioner DarcAngelo.

David expressed thanks to Mary Haroyan for spearheading our recent fall conference.

We discussed using Zoom Webinar for our next large meeting. It was suggested that we may be able to find a donor to cover the cost.

There was significant disagreement regarding the pros and cons of using Webinar instead of Zoom.

No firm decision was made.

Publication; Sharon

(Written report)

We welcome new member Cindy Wentz to our committee, and are grateful for her presence and willingness to be put to work on a couple of projects.

Third Thursday is not being held in December, and will resume in January, most likely with people from the Disability Policy Consortium MyOmbudsman program.

February will feature Cheryl Cumings and others from the membership committee. Sharon is trying to get the "Go Go Grandparent" group for March. We anticipate no third Thursday in April, 2022, in deference to our Spring conference. Other ideas are welcome.

We congratulated Dianna on her first time out as BayLines editor. The next issue will go out on December 24, barring any unforeseen technical glitches.

Myra continues to find new articles: one coming up on sugaring in Massachusetts, another by member Jeff Thompson in the pipeline, and perhaps one on Ski

for Light, which offers winter and summer events.

BSCB content on NewsLine now consists of our contact information only. It was difficult to maintain the content on a regular basis, as adding it has to be done by Gina Russo and it is difficult because of syntax and other technical parameters.

A new Events box has been formed on Philmore. Events may now be sent to events@acbofma.org, and Steve will post them to Philmore and on our website, while Dianna will mention them in BayLines Express.

Dropbox training was then discussed, and the pubs committee is suggesting Saturday, January 22, 2-022 at 1 PM for this training, subject to the approval

of the board.

We discussed the need to use the webinar version of Zoom for large events such as our Fall and Spring conferences so as to minimize audience background noise and interruptions, and so as to provide a separate panelist channel fore our speakers. The availability of this service would have to be activated each time and paid for through our treasurer. Comments from the board are welcome on this matter.

Submitted by Sharon Strzalkowski

(End of written report)

We agreed to hold Dropbox training at 2:00 PM on January 22. Board members, chapter officers, and committee chairs are welcome to attend. The Zoom meeting will be recorded and made available to others as needed.

events@acbofma.org is an address through which the publications committee can be notified of upcoming events.

If you have an event you want to publicize to the membership, send it to bscb-announce and also to events@acbofma.org

Sharon has already emailed the board and chapter presidents about the new events list.

Brian will forward a link to an MCB page that contains incorrect information about BSCB as a stakeholder. David will then ask Carla Cath to correct it.

Advocacy report; DeAnn

(Written report)

December 2021

This has been a busy and successful advocacy year for BSCB!

In the spring, BSCB joined with other organizations to secure \$850,000 in earmark funding for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) to provide computer training and equipment to Massachusetts residents who are blind and who were not eligible for vocational rehabilitation training. Many members made calls to their legislators in support of the funding.

DeAnn spoke to the Boston chapter of BSCB to recap 2020 advocacy highlights.

President(s) Brian Charlson and David Kingsbury wrote to the Secretary of Health and Human Services about the closing of MCB's Worcester and New Bedford offices, and the desire for more transparency. Through those efforts, BSCB has established a quarterly meeting between BSCB, NFB and the MCB commissioner to discuss issues of mutual concern.

As part of the 2021 national ACB convention, several BSCB members submitted resolutions that were adopted by the national board.

The Five-year agreement between BSCB and the Massachusetts Eye and Ear concluded in August. Though the formal agreement has concluded, they remain interested in hearing feedback from BSCB about patient experiences.

We worked successfully with the Disability Law Center as plaintiffs in a case that resulted in an agreement with the City of Boston to secure accessible absentee and vote-by-mail options in local elections. Through the advocacy of our members, the cities of Worcester, West Springfield, Cambridge, Watertown and Quincy also adopted accessible voting.

A session was organized for the fall BSCB conference that featured the director of litigation at DLC and BSCB members who were complainants, as well as community advocates.

BSCB submitted comments to several public officials about issues of interest to our members:

list of 5 items

- Rep. Ayana Presley, on the Online Accessibility Act
- Department of Transportation, on new regulations impacting guide dog teams during air travel
- MBTA, on the closing of route 52
- City of Cambridge, on the installation of subway benches
- The National Institute of Standards and Technology, on accessible voting for people who are blind

list end

After many years of service, Rick Morin concluded his term as BSCB representative to the MBTA RTAG executive committee. Nora Nagle has taken his place.

Thank you Rick for your service, and thank you Nora for assuming this important role!

President David Kingsbury was named co-chair of the RIDE advisory subcommittee.

BSCB board members Jerry Berrier and Jennifer Harnish were appointed by Governor Charles Baker to serve on the Rehabilitation Council at the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

In November, GDUM president and Massachusetts State House ADA Coordinator Carl Richardson was appointed by Gov. Baker to serve on the Permanent Committee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. This committee includes elected Representatives and Senators, as well as representatives

from the Attorney General's office and the disability community. It will address employment, transportation and other matters. BSCB members may contact Carl at carl.richardson@state.ma.us

The legislative committee changed its name to the advocacy committee and is working with the board to create a DropBox folder for sharing advocacy documents.

Individual BSCB members served on committees at the national level to make progress on audio description. At the state and local level, members testified at hearings, advocated for educational opportunities for students with disabilities, and worked to secure access to COVID vaccines during the pandemic.

Work remains to be done. Advocacy for 2022 will most likely involve continued work to ensure that MCB spends the generous funding that the legislature appropriated, and to improve transparency, communication, and accountability to blind consumers. Legislative work will be needed to make accessible voting permanent. Robust subcommittees that engage the expertise of our members around focused areas of advocacy such as voting and transportation will be beneficial.

The ACB Washington DC leadership conference and legislative seminar will be held soon (March 12 to 15.) As a new budget cycle begins, the COVID situation evolves, and Massachusetts chooses a new governor, there will be many opportunities for BSCB to make a difference.

Many Thanks to Brian Charlson and David Kingsbury for their leadership as president, and to the members of the board and advocacy committee, as well as
to all of our members who make this work possible.

After nearly six years as chair of the advocacy committee, I've decided to step back from this role. I plan to remain a member of the advocacy committee and will continue to serve on the ACB resolutions committee, as well as chair the Rehabilitation Council at MCB. Recent family responsibilities and new opportunities have contributed to the decision to make adjustments to my schedule.

My sincere thanks for the opportunity to serve this outstanding organization. I look forward to working with all of you in a different role.

Respectfully submitted by DeAnn Elliott

(End of written report)

DeAnn is stepping down as chair but will continue to serve on the advocacy committee. Many expressed thanks for the great work DeAnn has done.

Brian updated us on structured negotiations with Hulu which are slated to end soon. He will provide additional information as it becomes available.

Social committee; Rose

(Written report)

The last Social Committee Report of 2021.

By Rose M. Miller Date: 12/12/21 The Social Hang out on Zoom

The Social Committee held its last hang out on zoom for this year on December 12, 2021, at 1:00P.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Today we shared various local and international yummy food and sweet recipes: To name a few Armenian Grape leaves: West African Maffé: NOODLE KUGEL, Jewish eastern European dish: Bermuda made Cassava Pie: Potato Kugel: Cookup Rice, Gana

: Chocolate Chip Oatmeal Cookies, U s a. With permission of the participants recipes will be shared with all of BSCB.

The Social Committee will resume in the spring hopefully in person.

"Let's get social"

Happy Holidays to All

Rose M. Miller and the social committee

End of written report)

Rose said she received approximately ten recipes for the social hangout held earlier today.

She expressed disappointment that more people did not participate and send in recipes.

It was suggested that Steve may want to interview Rose for Council Connection.

Membership; Cheryl

(Written report)

Membership Committee

December Summary 2021

- We will meet Friday December 17 at 9:30 am.
- We still have BSCB members to contact as part of our Thank-a-thon.
- Two additional issues which members wanted to bring to BSCB attention are:

-Need to recruit younger members

--Need to recruit members from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds.

- I will be interviewed on Council Connection in December to talk about paying dues and updating our membership
- In February the Committee will be the guests for Third Thursday.

(End of written report)

Steve clarified that Cheryl's interview for Council Connection will appear in January, not December.

We discussed how to best reach out to members. It was suggested that we contact Cindy Hollis for suggestions.

Cheryl has been given initial training on the ACB software used for member certification. She will serve as Nick's backup.

Praise was offered to Cheryl for her work on the membership committee.

Old business

The only legislative seminar stipend request received thus far was from Brian Charlson. The board heartily passed a motion to approve his request.

David will issue one more reminder on BSCB-announce.

New business

A motion was made and unanimously passed to donate \$300 for the upcoming Braille Challenge event, as we did last year.

David tabled discussion of ideas for MCB re-allotment funds until our next meeting.

We discussed how to publicize the availability of MCB funding for equipment and training. David said Commissioner DarcAngelo is receptive to holding a town hall meeting to make consumers aware of how they may benefit from additional funds that have become available. David and the president of NFB of MA will participate in planning the meeting.

We discussed possible vehicles for publicizing the available funding, including senior centers, the MAB Vibrant program, elder services, commissions on disability, councils for independent living, the media, Mike Festa from AARP, Mass Senior Action, and sighted family members. Current blindness service

providers should certainly be doing their part also. There was general agreement that MCB should be proactive and play a primary role in this process.

Concern was expressed regarding how MCB will monitor and document requests that come in.

We recognize that how this is handled will have an impact on future funding.

Our next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2022 at 7:30 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Berrier, BSCB secretary