

Bay State Council of the Blind

Board call minutes, February 15, 2021

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 7:30 PM. All officers and board members were present. Cheryl had a time conflict for which she had been excused. She arrived at 8:05.

Also in attendance were Steve Dresser, DeAnn Elliott, Jessica Barr, and Sharon Strzalkowski.

The agenda was adopted.

The minutes of our January meeting were approved by a motion.

Treasurer's report; Rick.

He has been extremely busy with ACB work and was unable to provide a written report prior to the meeting.

Rick said he will have little time to devote to BSCB issues during the next month.

Our investments total is \$113,962.48.

Rick said some dues have been received. He has added an option to become a life member for \$250.00. (Secretary's note: The life member option is not yet shown on the BSCB website.)

Our current liquid assets total \$44,086.54.

We have not yet been reimbursed for our \$1,000 donation to the Disability Law Center; Brian said the paperwork is being processed by ACB.

Rick obtained a free copy of QuickBooks for Nick Corbett.

Some Comcast users have not been receiving emails from our listservs.

Rick asked Steve to re-send an email about a list he wants to set up. Steve acknowledged.

Nick Corbett has attended an AMMS training class to learn to manage our database.

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

President's report; Brian

Following a lengthy discussion of how to manage old BSCB paperwork, Jerry made, Mary seconded, and the board approved a motion to refer this to the publications committee for their recommendations.

Brian thanked David for submitting a draft letter regarding the MBTA's plan to discontinue the 52 bus. David will tweak the letter and send it to Brian, DeAnn, and Rick for final approval.

Publications committee report; David

(Written report)

Jerry Berrier has agreed to become the new Social Media Coordinator. He has also become a member of the Pubs Committee. Diana Leonard will send him necessary

Facebook and Twitter account credentials.

Myra Ross has developed an extensive pipeline of feature articles for Bay Lines Express, all to be prepared by BSCB members. Members have committed to

preparing articles on birding, swimming, gardening, and several other topics. We are looking for a catchy title for this section of Bay Lines Express.

Suggestions are welcome.

The topic for this month's Third Thursday with the BSCB will be genealogy. The topic will be introduced by Sharon Latka Davis. We would like to make the

March call about COVID vaccinations and are looking for a guest speaker to introduce the topic. Here too, suggestions for possible speakers are welcome.

We will skip doing a Third Thursday in April because of the convention. A possible May topic could be a transportation update.

The Philmore line is being updated to include contact information for BSCB officers. The web page with Officer bios is being updated, and will eventually include a bio for the new Board member.

Steve Dresser and Mary Haroyan currently receive BSCB contact forms. Steve feels another person should also receive this information, presumably the new Membership chair. Board suggestions on who this should be are welcome.

(End of written report)

Steve said BSCB contact forms go to him and Mary.

Brian said they should also go to whoever is appointed as our new membership chairperson, with a copy to Brian.

Mary said she is willing to continue receiving the e-mails from the contact form on the website and responding to inquiries until a new chair is appointed.

Legislative report; DeAnn

(Written report)

The agenda is now set for the 2021 ACB D.C. Leadership Meetings, which will run from February 21 to 23. Affiliates are asked to organize virtual meetings with their representatives on Feb 24, 25, and 26.

The three imperatives for this year are:

Medicare Demonstration of Coverage for Low Vision Devices Act

<https://pinecast.com/listen/7a4c3764-ae30-4dba-b6c3-3379e50e1002.mp3>

Disability Access to Transportation Act

<https://pinecast.com/listen/89095c4e-2ec9-495e-b501-cdccb1f788c2.mp3>

Exercise and Fitness for All Act

<https://pinecast.com/listen/a83b7cd9-90c8-4ba1-9513-9fd616cf258c.mp3>

We hope all members will be able to Zoom in for all or part of the seminar and will consider making a call or sending an email to their elected representatives

in Washington!

American Council of the Blind Students are offering five stipends for students to attend the legislative seminar /leadership meetings.

Governor Baker released the FY22 H1 budget on January 27th. The funding for MCB seems to be about \$1 million below FY21 figures. This was a topic of conversation

at the most recent meeting of the Statutory Advisory Board of MCB and will continue to be followed as we seek clarity.

DeAnn provided a legislative update to the Boston BSCB chapter at their Feb. 6th. Meeting.

DeAnn recorded a 20-minute statement about the Department of Transportation's draft forms for implementing new regulations concerning guide dogs and air

travel. The recording was sent to GDUI and ACB.

David Kingsbury wrote two letters to the MBTA in support of transportation. One letter was about preserving the #52 bus in Newton that serves the Carroll

Center for the Blind. Another letter questioned the decision to prioritize the addition of armrests on benches in subway stations. The issue is controversial

because it has been presented in news stories as an accommodation for riders with disabilities, but seems intended to prevent people who are homeless from

sleeping on benches.

On January 21, 2021, the World Wide Web Consortium ("W3C") released the First Public Working Draft of its new Accessibility Guidelines 3.0. It's the first

step in a long process towards finalizing new WCAG compliance criteria. A final draft isn't expected until late 2023. The W3C will accept comments until

February 26, 2021.

Good news!

list of 4 items

- Biden administration reversed proposed regulations from Trump administration that would have made it harder to qualify for SSDI benefits, and would have required additional paperwork from those enrolled. BSCB was one of several organizations that opposed the new rules.

- White House website has a new look, with greater accessibility.

- Sign language interpreters will be present for daily White House press briefings.

- Mass. Secretary of State William Galvin will file legislation to make broad-based voting by mail permanent.

list end

The legislative committee met January 14th and will meet again on March 4, after legislative seminar.

(End of written report)

DeAnn said the legislative committee will informally follow up on the issue of armrests on benches.

After discussing MCB concerns, Jerry made, Mary seconded, and the board approved a motion to refer this issue to the legislative committee. They are to discuss how we can help protect the long-term integrity of MCB services. They will report back to us at our March meeting.

Legislative seminar: Brian said since it's virtual this year, the legislator contacts can be spread out over several days.

Brian suggested we pay the \$20 fee up-front for each member participating.

The legislative committee will begin work on scheduling after their March 4th meeting.

Membership committee report; Mary

Optional fields for gender and ethnicity have been added to the ACB database.

Chapters should be encouraged to update the information for their members.

We discussed creating a Google form; Mary suggested we not use BSCB-announce but send the form to specific email addresses.

We should get the preamble from National to maintain consistent wording.

Mary and Cheryl will collaborate on this issue.

Spring Conference report; Frank

(Written report)

We met last weekend. All time slots have a tentative topic assigned to them. Approximately one third still need confirmation. We have substituted an auction to benefit the Bob Hachey memorial scholarship on Saturday

night. We may do the name that theme game as a Thursday topic instead. The save the date announcement has been sent out. We have decided to have a formal registration form without a registration fee but with an optional donation pledge section.

(End of written report)

Frank said the next committee meeting is scheduled for March 14 at 7:30 PM.

Social Committee report; Rose

(Written report)

On Thursday January 17, 2021 the social committee held the first social hang out of the year at 8:00 to 9:25 P.M. The Pub committee provided the zoom contact

and Rose Miller was hosting along with members of the social committee.

We did have a few focused questions and then it opened into a lively discussion.

It was an Open subject format. Topic and subjects that were discussed were how were people dealing with The 2020 Pandemic and what did they learn about

their self: Banking apps, lack of accessibility: vaccination shots where and how to get them, as well as who to reach out to in the state: Which state

reps are assisting the disability community.

Thanks to Pub committee for the new format and allowing the Social Committee to be the first to open it up to our membership.

The goal is to have a different subject or topic the third Thursday of the month at 8:00 to 9:00. M. The BSCB members will pick topics or subjects and

zoom will be provided by Pub committee

(End of written report)

Old business

The board went into executive session to discuss four candidates for the interim board position to replace Dianna Leonard. The board elected Rafael toro; Brian will contact him. Jerry will notify the other candidates.

We have a budget meeting scheduled for 7:30 PM on February 28.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully,

Jerry Berrier, secretary