

Bay State Council of the Blind

Board call minutes, January 10, 2021

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, along with Sharon Strzalkowski, Jessica Barr, Carl Richardson, and Nick Corbett.

The agenda was adopted.

Rosemary made, Mary seconded, and the board approved a motion to accept the minutes of our December 2020 meeting.

Treasurer's report; Rick

(Written report)

Rick emailed the summary below, along with

list of 2 items

- 2020 Year End Asset Balances
- 2020 Year End Profit and Loss

list end

Highlights:

list of 8 items

- 2020 Year End Gain = \$2,252.51
- 2020 Year End Asset Balance = \$ 43,711.46
- Kenneth Semien returned deposits made on his behalf for \$261.67
- Quickbooks license for Nick Corbett obtained from Intuit from the Intuit Accessibility Team providing we report access issues
- Nick Cornett added as AMMS user for BSCB
- Member lists sent to each chapter to facilitate dues collection by end of February
- PayPal Dues payment button generated and distributed for testing
- Dues notice for At Large members will go out as soon as I receive confirmation that the button works and is accessible

list end(End of written report)

Rick would like all dues in by February 28.

Rick said we can use the end of year statement he emailed us as a guide for our 2021 budget, as he anticipates little change in our budget this year.

Rick has not checked our investments this month; per a previous agreement, he provides us with that information quarterly.

Carl said GDUM has paid the remaining amount they owed for dues. He also said a dues request should have already gone out to members. GDUM officers are committed to paying dues in full and on time in the future.

Rick has been appointed technical director for ACB radio as of January 1. ; Brian and all congratulated him.

President's report; Brian

The upcoming ACB legislative seminar will be virtual and will contain much the same elements as previous legislative seminars, including a Capitol Hill day. A list of imperatives has not yet been made available.

David made, Jerry seconded, and the board approved a motion to quickly send out another announcement on BSCB-announce soliciting candidates for our open board position.

We will compose a set of not more than 3 questions to be sent two weeks prior to our next board call to all interested candidates, including the two we have already heard from.

David, Jerry and Brian will create the list of questions.

David and Brian will compose and send the announcement.

Publications; David

(Written report)

The Pubs Committee last met on January 7.

The December edition of Bay Lines Express included its first feature article by Brian Charlson. Thanks again to Brian for writing this.

Barbara Black from Northampton will write the January article on her experience rowing on the Connecticut River.

Myra Ross will send out an announcement soon to members to solicit future articles.

Tim Cumings will serve as host for the January 21 Third Thursday with the BSCB Zoom call. Steve Dresser will back him up.

David Kingsbury will schedule the Zoom call using the BSCB Zoom account and coordinate with Rose Miller sending out the invitation.

ACB lists will eventually be transitioning to the Groups.IO platform. However, the timeline is not yet known. It would be helpful for list managers at

affiliate level to be trained when the time is appropriate.

(End of written report)

Brian has already created a Zoom link. He will send Rose the New York number associated with the Zoom link for the Third Thursday call.

An email about the call will go out soon and again on the morning of the call.

David is working on finding a social media lead for the publications committee.

Legislative; DeAnn

(Written report)

Robert DeLeo retired as Mass. Speaker of the House and was replaced by Rep. Ronald Mariano (D-Quincy.)

Mayor Marty Walsh was nominated to be U.S. Secretary of Labor and will likely be replaced by Kim Janey from Boston City Council, who will be the first black woman to serve as mayor of Boston.

Rep. Kay Khan was awarded the 2020 B.L.I.N.D. legislator award in a virtual ceremony.

D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals Chief Justice Merritt Garland has been nominated to serve as the next U.S. attorney general. Garland has a reputation for

being competent and moderate, though not an aggressive advocate for civil rights.

Vanita Gupta, who has a lot of civil rights experience, is nominated for associate attorney general, with Kristen Clarke, president of the National Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, heading the Justice

department's Civil Rights Division. Garland worked to improve transparency during his time on the appeals court. This is likely to be an improvement for disability rights.

DeAnn has reached out to ACB to learn more about the arrangements for the 2021 Washington leadership/legislative seminar meetings, imperatives, and what

impact this week's unrest in Washington may have. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the inauguration and the unrest at the Capitol, it seems to be a fluid situation.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has issued new regulations that will impact service dogs and air travel. Specifically, service animals are limited to dogs, which brings the definition of a service animal into closer alignment with the definition in the Americans with Disabilities Act. Airlines can't

ban a particular breed and must allow psychiatric service animals to travel, although emotional support animals will not be permitted. The new rule permits

airlines to require paperwork for each round trip that may ask blind passengers to identify their dog's name, veterinarian, and other information. ACB welcomes the definition, but does not fully support the paperwork requirement, which many view as a step backward. ACB will continue to work with airlines as they implement the regulations, which go into effect this Monday (January 11, 2021.)

The Worcester and New Bedford MCB regional offices closed on December 21st. An initiative is underway for consumers to direct letters to sec. Sudders

and Commissioner D'Arcangelo to halt the closings and maintain a physical presence in the community. Information can be found at:

<https://act.seiu.org/a/savemcbervices>

The link to the 2020 voting survey was reposted in December, and the legislative committee will be working on the report soon.

DeAnn and Cheryl forwarded to President Charlson a draft response to the Online Accessibility Act, which deals with web accessibility. We're interested

in having a discussion about positions BSCB might take. The goal is to forward the response to Rep. Presley for consideration.

This year's final FY21 state budget included more than \$500,000 in earmarks for the Radio Reading program, including about \$300,000 for the Talking Information

Center. This was part of the Community Services line item in the MCB budget. Thoughts?

(End of written report)

DeAnn said Cheryl has received 44 voter surveys so far, and they hope to receive a few more.

The closing of the Worcester and New Bedford MCB regional offices remains contentious. BSCB attendees learned at the most recent SAB meeting that there wasn't a formal consumer survey prior to the decision, and MCB hadn't made use of Newline channels, which would be a way to reach individuals who do not use computers or social media and who are the majority of MCB consumers.

Brian assured the board it is a high priority to promote more effective communications from MCB officials.

DeAnn, who chairs the Rehabilitation Council at MCB, recently submitted the 2020 RC annual report to the RSA. Consumer concerns about transparency and the impact of closings were included.

The board briefly discussed the legislature's decision to provide \$550,000 in state funding to the Radio Reading program through the community services account of the MCB's budget. The program doesn't have a line item of its own and isn't subject to the same competitive public process to explore other uses for the funding.

Spring Conference; Frank

(Written report)

The Spring Conference Committee will meet again in one week. We have reached out to Kenneth Semienn Sr. However, he will be unable to join us as our keynote

speaker. We would like any and all suggestion as to whom else would make for a good keynote speaker. Kenneth will join us in the future, most likely in person when that is possible.

(End of written report)

Social; Rosemary

(Written report)

The Social Committee met on December 17, 2020 Nina, Jerry and David are the members of the committee.

We are seeking others from other chapters to join us to work with us and share their thoughts with events.

Nina was excused but shared her input on an earlier call.

The Social Committee proposes to host the first social event night this year.

On Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 8:00P.M. to 9:00 p.m.

We will have two to three questions

What strategies did you use to deal with the pandemic of 2020?

What did you learn about yourself in this situation?

What are your hopes, goals or expectations in the new year?

This may be recorded on zoom to see if we made any changes or reach the goals or expectations that were set. To review in the following year. Just a thought.

Brian and or Pubs may need to share the Zoom info ASAP to send to BSCB membership.

(end of Written report)

Other business

Our next call is scheduled for 7:30 PM on Monday February 15, 2021

We will have a budget call at 7:30 PM on Sunday February 28.

Brian said we need to revive the grants committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully,

Jerry Berrier, Secretary