

Bay State Council of the Blind

Board Minutes for May 11, 2020

Due to a problem with our Zoom link, Brian was unable to call the meeting to order until 7:41 PM.

All officers and board members were present except Rose Miller, who may have had difficulty accessing the ad hoc link we used.

Sharon Strzalkowski and Chris Devin were also in attendance.

The agenda was adopted, and the minutes of our April meeting were approved by the board.

### Treasurer's report; Rick

Rick emailed the following summary prior to the meeting, along with year to date reports.

(Written report)

Little changes since last report:

Our current liquid assets total 38,028.58 (last month \$38,267.26)

Our Loss as of May 11, 2020 is -\$3,430.37 (-\$3,191.69 last month\_

Purchased 5 Braille Forum Raffle tickets as is customary for National Convention

In a billing dispute with Zoom. They have dropped our 50% discount and non-responsive to trouble ticket submitted.

Have not calculated nor collected dues amounts owed by Charles River or GDUM.

(End of written report)

Rick said the Braille Forum raffle tickets cost \$250.00

When Rick added Webinar to our Zoom account, Zoom removed us from the 50% discount negotiated by Tech Soup. Rick said that should not have happened. The non-discounted cost of Webinar for up to 100 participants is \$40 per month. Rick explained the advantages of using Webinar for large groups.

Brian urged Rick to reach out for reimbursement from the caterer we had contracted with for the aborted BSCB convention.

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

## President's report; Brian

Brian asked to add an item under new business: What we can do for our members in lieu of sending delegates to the BSCB convention.

## Publications committee report; David

David and others are beginning to plan the next BSCB Hang-out.

Steve reported that Apple has approved the Council Connections podcast. Brian congratulated Steve for his persistence to get it back up and running.

Steve thanked Dianna and Tim for their assistance.

Bob said the next BayLines should be out before Memorial Day.

Brian has a draft of a president's message which he will send to Bob tomorrow.

## Legislative committee report; DeAnn

(Written report)

Sent an action alert to members in support of \$500 billion in funding in the next stimulus package to support state and local governments.

Promoted MCB town hall

Held three calls to discuss a response to a vote by mail initiative in Massachusetts that does not have an accessible option. Cheryl Cumings and Kim Charlson participated in panel discussions with Attorney General on same topic. Carl Richardson gathered information about bills that are circulating at State House.

Drafted op-ed about voting accessibility

Participated in SILC call featuring Sen. Elizabeth Warren, and submitted question about voting  
(End of written report)

A task force has been created to promote accessibility in the voting by mail options being proposed by three current bills, none of which include accessibility features.

DeAnn requested timely feedback from us on an op-ed piece she has written and will send to us after this meeting.

Brian mentioned a recent letter that was widely disseminated on this same topic. He and Kim wrote it, and Carl Richardson disseminated it.

Cheryl and Kim spoke on this issue at a democratic ward committee meeting.

## Membership committee report; Mary

(Written report)

The Membership Committee held a phone call for BSCB members at large on Monday May 4. There were 14 participants on the call, including nine at large members. In addition to conversation about how people were doing, David Kingsbury and Steve Dresser provided an overview of the BSCB web site. People expressed the opinion that another call in the near future would be welcome.

The Pioneer Valley group had a virtual meeting on May 9, with about 20 people joining. After discussions on a variety of topics, it was decided that the group would like to remain unaffiliated with any organization and let the direction and interests develop freely as it has done so far.

(End of written report)

Mary said the Pioneer Valley group has decided not to affiliate with any larger organization at this time, but the BSCB members who have been involved would still like to start a chapter in western Massachusetts.

Brian thanked Mary for forwarding informative ACB emails to BSCB members.

Sharon said ACB-link is now working well.

Sharon said she has no grants committee report, as they have not met recently.

## Old business

The following points were made regarding future BSCB meetings:

- Experience with in-person conventions and our recent online hangouts indicates that no matter how we structure a convention, we're likely to get the same basic core of people in attendance.
- Any face to face convention we hold should have a transportation component to help people in other parts of the state get to and from the venue.
- Our convention could be a one-day meeting or a weekend get-together.
- There is great value in getting together in-person.
- We should have a rather formal luncheon instead of a banquet.
- We need at least one live event per year.
- We should spend a significant amount on transportation.

- We should hold two one-day live events per year. We may wish to complement them with some online hangouts and social events.
- Our events should take place in the Boston area.
- It can be difficult to manage a one-day event that works for people from the other end of the state.
- We have not run a deficit at our recent spring conventions.
- The reason we initially decided not to use a hotel for this year's convention was to lower the cost for attendees, not to save money for the organization.
- We would have run a deficit, were it not for some generous benefactors.
- The convention needs to focus on business; elections, resolutions, etc., and it should probably be held in the spring.
- Zoom calls can focus on informative talks and the like.
- The fall conference might include informative programs and workshops.
- We could perhaps have one of those three types of meetings each quarter, such as an in-person convention in the spring, an in-person meeting in the fall, and Zoom get-togethers in the summer and winter.
- A business-only day could discourage some people from attending. There should be a social aspect.
- We will have to conduct business this fall since it did not happen in the spring.
- We may need to consider changes to our constitution, including the possibility of remote voting.
- One ACB affiliate recently changed their constitution to permit their business meetings, including elections, to be held online.
- There will be a lot for us to learn from the upcoming online ACB convention.

Brian asked each of us to come to our next meeting with some literal proposals on how our convention should be structured, and also how we might involve the membership in our discussions.

## New business

After some thoughtful discussion, Cheryl made, David seconded, and the board approved a motion to set aside \$500.00 to pay the basic \$25 registration fee for up to 20 BSCB members attending their first ACB convention.

After the convention, Mary will make follow-up calls to those whose registration fees we paid. She will encourage them to write an article for BayLines or do something else to give us feedback, with the overall goal of encouraging them to become more involved in BSCB.

Our next board call is scheduled for June 14 at 7:30 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully,

Jerry Berrier, Secretary