

Bay State Council of the Blind

Board call minutes, September 13, 2021

#### Officers and Board Members

- David Kingsbury President
- Frank Ventura First Vice President
- Cheryl Cumings Second Vice President
- Brian Charlson past president
- Jerry Berrier Secretary
- Rick Morin Treasurer
- Rose Miller board member
- Mary Haroyan board member
- Rafael Toro board member

#### Ex Officio

- Steve Dresser webmaster
- DeAnn Elliott legislative chair

David called the Zoom meeting to order at approximately 7:30 PM.

All officers and board members were present except Steve Dresser.

Jerry arrived 15 minutes late due to a previously noted conflict.

Also in attendance were Nick Corbett; assistant treasurer, Chris Devin; chair of our constitution and bylaws committee, Jessica Barr; South shore chapter, Russ Andrews filling in for Sharon Strzalkowski, and Nona Haroyan; chair of our current nominating committee.

After calling the role, David asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of 9/11 and of Bob Hachey who died approximately one year ago.

Brian made, Mary seconded, and the board approved a motion to adopt the agenda as amended with one new item from Frank.

Brian made, Cheryl seconded, and the board approved a motion to accept the minutes of our August meeting.

## Treasurer's report; Nick & Rick

(Written report)

Submitted on 09/12/2021

By: Nick Corbett, Assistant Treasurer

1. Profit and Loss and Balance Sheet reports are attached.
2. Our year to date profit and Loss cash position (income minus expenses) stands at \$308.10, pending our \$1,450 tax payment to an accountant. Following the payment to the accountant, our profit and loss will be negative, but this is projected to be more than offset by ACB National walk fundraising deposits, which are expected later this month in an amount exceeding \$5,000.
3. Our total liquid assets stand at \$43,977.06, and these are broken down as:
  - ☐ Bank of America checking account: \$12,851.12
  - ☐ PayPal cash account: \$5,752.63
  - ☐ Bank of America savings account: \$25,371.32
- A. \$1.99 is listed under "other Expenses" in the balance sheet report, and this is an expense that has not yet been deducted from our total liquid assets and assigned to a ledger account. After this number is assigned to a ledger account, we will see our liquid assets decrease by \$1.99.
4. Two factor authentication is blocking assistant treasurer's access to our long-term investment account presently.
5. Online accounts access is being transitioned to a single bay.state.council.blind Gmail account, and two factor authentication means are being transferred to assistant treasurer.
6. Tax filings have been prepared and are pending David's signature for submission.
7. Annual insurance premiums have been paid, including both D and O and Liability.
8. One Password has been configured, and access has been extended to the president, secretary, treasurer, and assistant treasurer.
9. The assistant treasurer is reviewing the BSCB investment policy.
10. Non-profit discounts are being pursued for BSCB Zoom accounts.
11. Signature authorization on Bank of America accounts needs to be transitioned to assistant treasurer.
12. 40 GB of treasurer records are ready to be transferred into a BSCB held Dropbox account.

13. The treasurer and assistant treasurer would like an update on the establishment of a BSCB scholarship and its funding sources.

14. The assistant treasurer is working through remaining QuickBooks accessibility blockers, and the purchased JAWS scripts appear to fall short of providing full accessibility of this software.

15. Overall, the transition of treasurer duties is progressing nicely, and the assistant treasurer will be working to generate treasurer reports moving forward, with continued support from the treasurer.

(End of written report)

Nick said he and others need to meet with Bank of America in person to update signatories.

Nick said he and Rick have made a lot of progress, and Rick expressed great confidence in Nick.

Rick will continue to support Nick as needed.

Nick questioned funding of our scholarship; David and others provided some clarification. The money will come from the Bob Hachey auction we held several months ago.

On an ongoing basis, it will be funded through a separate fund, not from our general operating budget.

The scholarship will be offered in years when we have raised adequate scholarship funds.

Nick will reach out to Brian Hartgen to try and resolve some specific issues with the scripts for Quicken.

Not all chapters have submitted their dues. After a brief discussion, Rick agreed to send out invoices to chapter presidents. He said the cost is \$9.00 per member. If a person is also paying dues to another chapter, the cost gets split.

In response to a question about a \$1400 donations expense, Rick said \$400 of that was for the Bob Hachey Angel contribution, and \$1000.00 was money paid to the Disability Law Center, for which we were supposed to have been reimbursed. Brian will follow up on that immediately.

### President's report; David

Officers will remain at the end of this meeting to select an at-large member for the nominating committee.

Chris clarified that the officers select an at-large member when board members are to be elected, and board members select the at-large member in years when officers are to be elected. Chris clarified that it's appropriate to include the immediate past president as a voting officer.

David reviewed part of our constitution which states that board positions are to be elected in odd numbered years, while officers are elected in even numbered years.

We had a lengthy discussion of how to handle election of positions for which the current electees are beyond their term limits. There was consensus that we have the ability to extend a term under unusual circumstances such as the current pandemic.

If a current officer or board member chooses to resign, the board should fill that position only on an interim basis until an election would naturally occur for that position.

Frank made, Mary seconded, and the board approved a motion to elect board members in the fall 2021 conference and officers in the spring 2022 conference. In the meantime, the board will attempt to fill any open interim positions.

## Constitution

Chris reminded us that at our fall 2021 conference we will need to have an amendment permitting us to hold the election. It will need to be read once in the morning and once in the afternoon and then be voted on by the membership.

Suggestions from those present for the constitution and bylaws committee to consider included:

- We want to be able to have remote business meetings.
- Consider changing Publications committee to Communications committee.
- Consider changing Legislative committee to Advocacy committee.
- Consider adding “legally” where the word “blind is used.
- Possibly change visually impaired to low vision
- Clarify the meaning of Ex officio

We agreed to handle only the election amendment and election of board members in the fall 2021 conference.

The constitution and bylaws committee will then make recommendation to be handled in our spring 2022 conference.

Rick pointed out that help may be available from ACB Media for running our fall conference, even if we choose not to stream it.

Jessica Barr and Steve Dresser have agreed to serve on the constitution and bylaws committee with Chris.

David will forward to Chris an amendment that Jerry, Frank and Rick had written some time ago.

David provided feedback to the RTAG committee regarding accessibility issues with their “book the ride” website.

Publications committee report; Sharon; (not present at this meeting)

(Written report)

Jonathan Gale will present about housing issues this third Thursday, Sept. 16. Josh Pearson will speak on ablism on Oct. 21, and Sharon was able to contact

him this morning to ask for a summary of what he will be discussing. We decided that the November session would be on the second Thursday, Nov. 11, as

the third Thursday is two days before our fall conference, and the fourth is Thanksgiving. Tim will contact Dale at Blind Mice Mart and ask for a presentation

of their products for holiday shopping.

We would like to suggest that there be a social hangout, perhaps on a Saturday in December, as a holiday gathering. Perhaps Rose could facilitate this?

A gradual transition to a couple of editors for Baylines Express is taking place, with more details to come.

A possible article for Baylines Express is a collection of holiday baking recipes. Steve suggested Kate Crohan, and will get contact info for her to Myra.

Recipes from anyone else are happily accepted.

Jerry mentioned that Facebook is getting more difficult to manipulate, with regard to copying and pasting material. He will begin putting the Council

Connection announcements on Facebook.

In response to the fall conference committee expectations, we discussed what a new committee member might do for us. Someone else to post Facebook and

Twitter entries under Jerry's direction would be helpful, and we are considering asking someone to monitor the Philmore voicemail, which Sharon has been

doing for years.

Steve removed some 600 people with funky email addresses not belonging to BSCB from our Wordpress site, and continues to monitor the situation. We wonder

if the contact form on our website serves any purpose besides attracting advertisements, and Steve will speak with Mary for her perceptions, as she has

dealt with it a lot.

David has sent a report to the board about progress of the drop box committee, but just summarized by saying that we are close to having a secure place

for backing up all documents that will not be owned by any one person.

David mentioned the idea, to be on the board agenda, about having nonpersonal emails for some people, for instance, advocacy and treasurer on our email lists, just as we have

[president@acbofma.org](mailto:president@acbofma.org) now.

(End of written report)

Rose said she would prefer to do a social hangout in December on a Sunday, possibly on the topic of recipes.

Mary agreed that our BSCB contacts page generates mostly spam, but she pointed out that we learned of Rafael through that page. It's okay to remove the contacts page as long as there is a way people can reach us. The publications committee will discuss this further.

### Fall conference; Mary

(Written report)

Below is a summary of the first Fall Conference Planning meeting. The conference will be held virtually on Saturday November 20.

We will start the day at either 9:30 or 10:00.

Morning portion: Times are very approximate

Welcome by either BSCB President or Fall Conference Coordinator (5 minutes)

Participant introductions (15 minutes)

Committee presentations/updates- Legislative, Membership, Publications, Social- Chairs will be asked to share what they feel is important and to keep in mind any potential new committee member who might like to join. (Mary will contact committee chairs)

David to update on other inactive or less active BSCB committees along with any other presidential update.

This session will include time for participant questions and comments. (about 1 hour)

Discussion with Andrew Leland author of the New York Times article, "Is there a right way to act blind" – This session will involve Andrew talking about what led to the writing of this article and then for audience participation. (Barbara or Myra will reach out to Andrew) (45-60 minutes)

Lunch12-1, I was thinking , maybe we can leave the Zoom room open and let people know they can come back in early to very casually hang out with whoever might be there. What do you think?

Afternoon portion:

1:00 BSCB business, elections and voting on any constitutional amendments.

Following the business portion we decided to end the day on a more fun and lighthearted tone. Some of the things we talked about were:

Door prizes of one or two gift cards- ask the BSCB Board for funds toward this

For the following activities, anyone on the committee is encouraged to look into a possible activity:

Trivia or some other similar game.

A storytelling or who done it kind of activity that people play a part in.

Other ideas that were mentioned for possible speakers:

Self driving car technology- Tim has a possible contact

Facial recognition technology by Matthew Shifrin

We decided to meet again on October 3 at 7:30. If we find we need to meet earlier, we could do so, let's just see how things progress.

Thank you.

(End of written report)

The committee will be meeting again in the next several weeks.

## Legislative report; DeAnn

(Written report)

September 2021

We begin the month of September with great news! A settlement agreement was signed on September 8th between the Bay State Council of the Blind, the Boston Center for Independent Living, five individual claimants including BSCB 1st Vice President Cheryl Cumings and Rhonda Mencey, and the Chair of the Boston Elections Commission Eneida D. Tavares and the City of Boston.

Members might recall that BSCB and BCIL, together with the Disability Law Center, were able to secure accessible absentee voting/vote by mail during the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision did not extend beyond the health emergency, and more legal action was necessary. With the hard work of the Disability Law Center, all parties have agreed that it is in their mutual best interest to extend accessible voting through December 31, 2025. We are hopeful that this case in Boston, the Commonwealth's largest city and capital, will lead to full accessible voting by mail. Details to follow. Many thanks to our individual plaintiffs, to DLC, and to our board and members for their outstanding advocacy!

President David Kingsbury and the president of the NFB of MA are scheduled to meet with MCB Commissioner D'Arcangelo this week to discuss consumer issues.

Since their last meeting, MCB has agreed that members of the public can make local Zoom recordings of open meetings of the Rehabilitation Council and Statutory Advisory Board after notifying the chair. Meeting recordings are also available on MCB's website. BSCB has expressed interest in posting recordings on the BSCB website and is exploring what can be shared and under what circumstances.

Two BSCB members, Secretary Jerry Berrier and Dr. Jennifer Harnish, were appointed by Gov. Baker this month to serve on the Rehabilitation Council at the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB.) Jerry's seat is one which represents a consumer advocacy organization (BSCB,) and he is a source of information for BSCB members who have RC questions, suggestions or concerns. More appointments

are necessary for the RC to reach quorum, but we are delighted that these two representatives have been formally named. . Congratulations to both Jerry and Dr. Harnish!

The Medical Device Nonvisual Accessibility Act (H.R. 4853) was introduced in the United States House of Representatives on Thursday, July 29. The bill was introduced by Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL). This is important legislation that calls upon the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to promulgate nonvisual accessibility standards for Class II and Class III medical devices with digital displays. This standard would apply to devices such as glucometers, sleep apnea machines, blood pressure monitors, thermometers, and oximeters. We hope that it will lead to full accessibility of all visual features. The American Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind support this legislation.

Support for Coverage of Low Vision Aids for Medicare Beneficiaries. This initiative addresses expansion of health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act, addressing gaps in basic health coverage for Medicare beneficiaries, and the enhancement of long-term care for seniors and people with disabilities.

The Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (ITEM) coalition has written a letter to include a vision benefit in the budget reconciliation package. ACB has signed onto this letter, which BSCB supports.

Members may recall that one of ACB's legislative imperatives this year is the Disability Access to Transportation Act (DATA.) Among other things, this legislation will create a one-stop para transit pilot program, require the completion of the Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines, provide greater funding for transportation grants, and improve the DOT complaint process. DeAnn called Rep. Ayana Presley as BSCB legislative chair and asked her to cosponsor

HR 1697.

The ACB board met on August 31 to pass resolutions. They will meet again at the end of September to discuss the remaining resolutions

(End of written report)

Cheryl described the process of voting online and said she has tried it and it went very smoothly.

Brian and others praised those involved in this significant victory, and they expressed hope that other communities will provide this form of accessible voting in the future.

David will contact Sharon Strzalkowski to suggest accessible voting as a topic for a Third Thursday session.

We will continue working with the DLC and BCIL toward a goal of making accessible voting available throughout Massachusetts.

DeAnn made some suggestions for how to publicize what has been accomplished with accessible voting. David agreed that we need to have a special meeting as soon as possible to discuss this.

We need to formally express our gratitude to DLC.



DeAnn will send David a copy of the financial information provided by MCB prior to our last RC meeting. She also made other suggestions of what David may want to cover later this week when he meets with the commissioner.

We discussed an alleged data error at MCB involving a mix-up in names and addresses. David has communicated with the person who reported it, and he will discuss our concerns with Commissioner D’Arcangelo.

Concerns have also been raised regarding a recent MCB survey which contained demographic questions thought to be inappropriate and unnecessary. It was pointed out that we need to find out what the federal government requires before we question MCB.

#### Social committee; Rose

She has no recent activity to report.

#### Membership committee; Cheryl

The Membership Committee will hold its first meeting on Wednesday September 15.

#### Old business

Scholarship: We discussed our responsibility to pay travel and lodging expenses for the scholarship winner. This is being tabled until it is determined whether the 2022 ACB convention will be virtual or in-person.

David thanked those involved in setting up a Dropbox account for BSCB to use as a repository.

As secretary, Jerry needs to send invitations to committee chairs, who will then invite their committee members to use their committee folder when appropriate. A committee chair can decide whether to give committee members editing privileges. There is also an FTP option for those who choose not to use Dropbox.

David will add an agenda item for our next board meeting to discuss a folder provided by Rick containing over 30GB of records and other documentation.

We agreed that it is appropriate to have position-based acbofma email addresses, such as [secretary@acbofma.org](mailto:secretary@acbofma.org). The publications committee will be asked to create the emails and passwords.

We agreed to establish a means of sending BSCB announcements to members only. The publications committee is charged with working out the details.

Low vision groups: Apparently low vision groups coordinated by MABVI are being asked to provide social security numbers of their members. It was suggested that David make the MCB commissioner aware of this to find out the rationale for this requirement.

DeAnn will ask Amy Ruell, who is involved in coordination of the groups.

Transportation: We will consider reviving the transportation committee and encouraging paratransit systems around the state to set up programs similar to the Flex Ride pilot in Boston.

Our next meeting is scheduled for October 10 at 7:30 PM.

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

Addendum: The officers met after the meeting and selected Myra Ross as first choice for member at large for the nominating committee. We were reminded that the member at large cannot be affiliated with any BSCB chapter. David will contact her.

If she declines, Barbara Black would be a second choice.

Respectfully,

Jerry Berrier, secretary