

Rocky Bottom Retreat and Conference Center of the Blind  
Board Meeting Minutes  
April 18, 2020  
Via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by President Frank Coppel. He reviewed Zoom procedures for this meeting. David Houck opened the meeting in prayer.

The roll was called for the Rocky Bottom Retreat and Conference Center of the Blind Board. Those present were Jennifer Bazer, Ed Bible, Debra Canty, Shannon Cook, Frank Coppel, David Houck, Lenora Robertson, and Valerie Warrington, Thomas Bowen was absent.

Others Present included Laverne Addison, Belinda Banks, Dorothy Barksdale, Steve Cook, Shelley Coppel, Linda Dizzley, Loretta Green, Tiffany Mitchell, Isaiah Nelson, Derique Simon, JW Smith, Thom Spittle, and Pat and Dale Wolthoff.

Since the minutes were distributed prior to the meeting, a motion was made by Ed Bible and seconded by Jennifer Bazer to forego the reading of the minutes from December and January. The motion to approve them was passed by the board.

Mr. Coppel mentioned the 100/100 club that was started at the December board meeting. Thus far, it has raised approximately \$8000 for the camp. The commercial refrigerator and freezer were purchased with the help of the Salem Lions Club. He reported that the dishwasher does not need to be replaced, just the thermostat. The oven will be the next appliance to be replaced in the kitchen. Mt. Hebron was planning to go to RBRCCB in late March to do some repairs, but as with everything during the pandemic, plans changed.

**\*\*Treasurer's Report:**

The financial statement was read from December through today. The balance is \$953.57; however, all of that is designated for the commercial kitchen. The children's camp balance is \$863.99. The general fund has \$0. Lastly, the Endowment fund has \$4150.02. The amount is less due to the economy, not any withdrawals. Total holdings are \$5967.68. JW Smith and Loretta Green asked about donations from their chapters that they did not hear read. Valerie will check her records for those and get back with them. Frank stated that part of that was due to the refrigerator fund being set up through the Senior Division. Funds were put into that account and written to RBRCCB for the refrigerator, so all donors may not have been tracked through the RBRCCB checkbook.

David Houck moved, and Jennifer Bazer seconded for passage of the treasurer's report. The motion was passed.

**\*\*Cancellations due to Corona/COVID-19**

The following have been cancelled: two rentals, Fun Day, the upstate fishing trip, and spring Senior Camp. Mr. Coppel asked the board for feedback on whether to use the funds left that have been earmarked for kitchen upgrades, for the routine expenses at the camp, if other funding is not available. This would be until summer rentals begin. Jennifer Bazer said that the Summer Teen Program, BELL Academy, and Children's Camp The first two are to be paid rentals. She proposed keeping the money in the kitchen fund. She said that successful Transitions could make a \$10,000 deposit in advance of the summer rentals to allow the kitchen money to remain in that account. David Houck asked for Ed Bible to consider having the Federation Center give RBRCCB a \$500 grant to help too. Mr. Bible said to move forward with that donation. The Coppels pledged \$100 to the camp too. Several people, including Shelley Coppel, expressed how much the camp means to them, and how much it has meant to others who have been affiliated with the camp. Mr. Houck suggested sending solicitation letters to help boost the account balance. Mr. Coppel approved taking action.

**\*\*Midlands Gives:**

Midlands Gives will take place on Tuesday, May 5, 2020. Just as with last year, there will be a competition among the NF B of SC districts. There will be a focus on the Power Hour, which RBRCCB won last year. The Power Hour award amount is \$2000 this year. All transactions will be done online. The minimum contribution amount is \$10, down from \$20 last year. Each donation will be counted for the district in which the donor lives, unless otherwise specified. There will be people available to help with the online donations if needed. Steve Cook will post the links on the website when he gets them.

**\*\*Fundraising:**

Jennifer Bazer and Valerie Warrington approached Walmart to drum up familiarity with RBRCCB programs to put a name, face, and story with the grant applications submitted for the NFB of SC and RBRCCB. Each store has their own grant money, between \$500 and \$5000, to award, so organizations can apply to each store separately. Jennifer and Valerie have applied for 20+ grants. The hope is that the stores will give RBRCCB and the NFB of SC some money to help further the mission and programs. Any Federationist can make the pitch to their local store. This is not strictly limited to Jennifer and Valerie. For those who are interested in helping, please get in touch with Jennifer, Valerie, or Frank to obtain the materials to take with you when you present to the general manager and his or her team at that Walmart.

**\*\*The Wolthoffs announced that they pledge \$500 for the Power Hour on Midlands Gives Day.**

**\*\*National NFB Support of RBRCCB:**

Chair Coppel met with national NFB president Mark Riccobono in February to ask for support from the national organization. He said that Riccobono was noncommittal. David Houck recommended having an article put in *The Braille Monitor* to bring national attention and support to Rocky Bottom.

**\*\*Air B & B:**

After careful evaluation by people involved with Air B & B, the camp facilities were determined not to be up to the standards necessary to make it feasible to put on Air B & B right now. The location is great for the Air B & B platform, but the rooms would need to be completely renovated to bring it up to the expectations of users of the service. The cost involved is out of range for the camp at this time. It may be possible down the road to reassess the situation and take a different route.

**\*\*Fund Day Fundraisers:**

The two biggest money makers during Fun Day are the drawing tickets and the auction. Frank proposed selling the tickets and having an auction, maybe at the center, instead of camp. The costs from hosting an event at RBRCCB would offset the money brought in, with cleaning, power costs, etc. An event at the center would also involve selling food. JW Smith suggested having the event at a park under a shelter there. Ed Bible agreed that having the event in Columbia is a great idea. Shannon Cook expressed that having the event at a time after the restrictions from COVID are lifted would need to be considered too, to allow RBRCCB to publicize the activities far and wide. Mr. Coppel said they were thinking of having it in the fall. Pat Wolthoff reminded the board that the Columbia Chapter BBQ is scheduled for October 15, 2020. Mr. Coppel said that the auction would not compete with the BBQ. This Fun Day could be in September or November. The next quarterly board meeting would be in July, but Mr. Coppel would like to decide prior to that; because, July would be too late to begin making plans for a successful event. Jennifer Bazer asked if an online auction had been considered before. Frank said no. Several people mentioned knowing about and participating in online auctions in the past. This would be open to anyone who uses the internet, not just in SC, but nationally, if not worldwide. Participants would not be restricted by geographical locations, transportation, COVID, etc. The items would be things with detailed descriptions and that people are familiar with, so as to not necessarily need to be hands on. Suggestions included from David Houck a weekend from the Marriott in Charleston, a carriage ride, and a Myrtle Beach package. Steve Cook pointed out the benefit of the online auction drawing in customers/donors who were not in the NFB, so we would not be pulling from the same group of people exclusively. If well publicized, it could really bring in quite a bit of money, given the Fun Day auction brings in \$2000-\$3000 for just the camp attendees. Mr. Coppel suggested having a quick RBRCCB meeting on June 1, following the NFB of SC meeting to allow the board to discuss the online auction idea more, and possibly

pin down a date. David Houck expressed agreement with waiting until the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Shannon Cook suggested coming up with a few tentative dates for the auction in the fall; because, with so many events being postponed until later in the year, the competition for time and attention will be fierce. Shelley Coppel suggested checking with the Biltmore in Asheville to see if they would offer a package. Dates were tossed out. Having the auction over a week was recommended by Jennifer Bazer. Doing so would allow people to be able to view items, make bids, make counter bids, and so on, without being rushed to get it in over a weekend. The week of October 31 through November 7 was chosen to hold the auction. Tiffany Mitchell recommended having everyone participate in obtaining auction items, not just a couple of people. She feels having more participation from the board, and other Federation members, would improve the money-making possibilities by having a larger variety of items that would have broader appeal.

Mr. Coppel said that was great; there still needs to be coordinators for the auction items.

#### **\*\*Operations Report:**

Ed Bible reported on the grounds and facilities. Though the gates are closed, many people are jumping the gate to use the grounds, the pond, etc.

All of the timber from the winter storms of 2018 has finally been cleared out. The three guest rooms' AC, in the conference center, are not working and have not been for a while. David Houck suggested asking Castle Brothers to go to camp to repair the AC units, and stay overnight, if necessary. One of the neighbors, Barry came and helped clean out the conference center basement. Neither of the computers at camp are working. Ed will ask his son Ashton to go up to camp to troubleshoot the problems, and hopefully fix them. DHEC is worried about cross contamination with the pool. DJ will come up to the camp next week to give a letter for DHEC's purposes to state that the pool water does not back up into the well, eliminating the likelihood of cross contamination. Also, DHEC wanted the holding tank at Oglesby to be inspected by June 1. If any repairs are noted in the inspection report, RBRCCB has until August 1 to make those repairs. There is now a procedures manual and an emergency preparedness plan in place too. Copies are being kept at both RBRCCB and the FCB. Linda Dizzley suggested keeping electronic/scanned copies at both locations to have more security for the paper trail that DHEC wants to see. Mr. Coppel said that electronic copies were the method by which the records were being stored.

The Salem Lions paid for the refrigerator. RBRCCB sent them a check for \$3500 for the cost of the freezer. They in turn, will have the chimney in Osterneck repaired. That has not been done due to COVID, but it will be taken care of as soon as it can safely be scheduled. Shelley mentioned that if anyone knows of retailers who sell refurbished appliances, to pass that info along. The electric stove at Ellenberg needs to be replaced, and preferably before the national senior week October 18<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>. The fall

session of senior camp is scheduled for September 20-24. Children's camp is set for June 6 – 13. If those dates need to be moved, August 1 – 8 is also available.

Thom Spittle asked how Linda Bible is doing, and how much pay is owed to her. Mr. Coppel said that she is doing better than even in December. Her stamina is improving. Having this time of low rentals has allowed her a breather to rest more than she would have otherwise. Valerie Warrington said that her pay is 11 months behind. Linda is not complaining about not being paid though. Without having utilities or rent payments, that has substantially lessened her monthly expenses. She does not want the board to worry about her backpay at this point. Mr. Coppel stated that when RBRCCB is able, she will be paid all of what she is owed. The neighbors in the area are assisting her with getting groceries and medicine.

No one had anything else to bring before the board. Frank asked Debra Canty to close the meeting in prayer, which she did.

There will be a very short meeting on June 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. The quarterly meeting will be held in July, but the date is to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned by President Coppel.

Submitted by,  
Shannon Cook  
RBRCCB Secretary