

NFB of SC  
April 6, 2019  
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Federation Center

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Coppel.

The members present were Frank Coppel, Lenora Robertson, Debra Canty, Shannon Cook, Valerie Warrington, Jamie Allison, Ed Bible, Steve Cook, Linda Dizzley, Loretta Green, and Isaiah Nelson.

Members not present were JW Smith, Garrett Mosley, Donald Capps, and Keith Redding.

Others present were AJ McFadden, Matthew Duffell-Hoffman, Jennifer Bazer, Parnell Diggs, Julie Bible, Dondra Bible, Shelley Coppel, Herbert Boykin, Pat Wolthoff, Dale Wolthoff., Hilda Smalls, Dorothy Barksdale, and David Houck.

NFB Pin: Loretta Green paid \$5 because she was not wearing her NFB logo at this meeting.

Reading and Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the December and January meetings were read, moved for passage, seconded, and passed by the board. President Coppel did add a comment to the mention of his grandson's heart surgery that took place in January. He thanked everyone for the thoughts and prayers sent his way during this stressful time. Luke is doing very well now and is progressing as he should.

Treasurer's Report:

Valerie Warrington read the financial report for the past 4 months. It was moved, seconded, and passed by the board.

Ending Balance \$6908.42,  
BELL \$2845.96,  
Scholarship \$125  
Balance for the General Fund \$3937.49.

Shannon cook moved for passage of the report. It was seconded and passed by the board.

President Coppel asked Valerie Warrington how the transition is going with having the national center take over compiling the financial statements. She said that the transition is going well, but it is a slow process. There are certain ways that information has to be coded. Successful Transitions is set up; the rest is being worked on. Mr. Coppel asked the board's thoughts on using a summary method instead of a detailed financial report. The board opted to have it stay as it is, with all of the detailed information presented.

He also asked about increasing the mileage from 0.35 to \$0.40 per mile. Shannon Cook moved for passage. The motion was seconded and passed by the board.

Federation Center Report:

David Houck reported on the updates, upgrades, and changes to the center staff, buildings, etc. Dondra Bible has come on board as the Special Projects Coordinator. She reports having ten years of office administration experience and technical skills. Beginning the week of April 22<sup>nd</sup>, the lighting will be changed to LED lighting. This will save the center approximately \$900 per year. The board room has new chairs. New shelving has been installed in the storage room across from the kitchen. The cabinets can be locked to prevent theft of kitchen items. A new desk will go in the office that Dondra will use. The braille printer will be moved over some to accommodate the desk. The router and server that are now in that office will be moved and upgraded. The FCB will replace and update the flooring in the main meeting hall.

The four blind instructors are working with approximately 20 students, both in-house and through virtual training. The Sweetheart Dance, Leadership Seminar, Columbia Chapter BBQ, Lions Fishing Trip, and the BELL Academy have been held or will be held at the center this year.

Donations have been made to the FCB from Blue Cross Blue Shield, Banks Construction, Castle Foundation, Joyce Martha Hill Foundation, and the City of Columbia.

Mr. Bible continued with the FCB report. He discussed the MOU with the SC Commission for the Blind and with Clemson University and its autonomous car initiative. Clemson wanted blind people to test drive the cars. Representatives from Clemson came to Columbia to tour the FCB and receive information on accessibility.

#### Amazon Smile Program:

The NFB of SC has now been signed up as one of the organizations that can be selected on Amazon Smiles. A percentage of total sales will be donated back to the NFB of SC. Mr. Bible gave out information on how to sign your Amazon account up for this service. He said that Amazon will go back 8 quarters. For all organizations who are in good standing with the IRS, but who had not been signed up, their funds will be split among those organizations who are signed up. He said that Dondra Bible can help people sign up if needed. Steve Cook said that the information has already been put on the NFB of SC website and the list serve.

#### Successful Transitions:

Jennifer Bazer restated that the students that ST now works with are now all blind students. The number has gone from 400 to 120 students. Though the amount of students has decreased, it allows for more attention and focus to be given to each of the students who are there age 13 - 21. AJ McFadden said that he went for a leadership weekend and enjoyed the Washington Seminar. He like the feeling of comradery that being with fellow blind people brought. ST is taking six students to Las Vegas, along with six staff members. ST students will participate in the state convention, being asked to choreograph the theme song. Each quarter, there is a retreat. The most recent retreat was in March at the FCB.

(\*\*The board took a quick break at this point.)

#### Branding:

For the past five years, the Lee County Chapter has hosted a Black & White Banquet. President Riccobono saw the post about the banquet, and wanted to have the NFB of SC change the name of the banquet to reflect the values set forth in the recently adopted code of Conduct. Mr. Riccobono did not want there to be a misunderstanding about the nature of the name of the event. Mr. Coppel brought this up just as a reminder that all posts to social media, list serves, etc., should be carefully considered from all perspectives to ensure that the intention is clear. Linda Dizzley stated that the name will be changed to just The Banquet.

#### Midlands Gives:

President Coppel encouraged the district board members to rally their troops in their districts to raise money for RBRCCB and the NFB of SC during Midlands Gives in May. There will be literature available to distribute on the list serve and other usual outlets. There will be a trophy given at the state convention for the district whose members raise the most. Chick-fil-A, Crossings Deli, and East Bay Deli have all given permission for representatives from the NFB of SC to collect donations for Midlands Gives that day. Emphasis is being placed on donating during the Power Hour from noon to 1:00 p.m. The organization with the most unique donors during that hour will get a bonus of \$2500!

#### Member-at-Large Chapter:

Mr. Coppel has asked Ed Bible to organize the Member-at-Large Chapter. He asked for volunteers to help Mr. Bible with that. No one spoke up. The president wants the chapter to be ready to have its first meeting at the state convention this August. President Coppel said that he recently learned that people could be members of more than one chapter. Many on the board were unaware of this. A lively discussion followed to explore the multi-chapter membership concept. In theory, someone could pay dues to a chapter in another district and run for a board seat based on that district's designated territories. The national leadership is looking for ways to encourage more participation, not find reasons to restrict interest. This would be a benefit to college students who are members of their hometown chapter, but want to join in their college's town too.

#### Membership Coins:

The national office is getting away from membership cards and moving to these new coins. The new processes for members will improve the method for informing people about the NFB philosophy, what it is, and how it is done. The coins will be given at the state convention during a membership celebration.

#### Website:

President Coppel commended the Computer Science and Technology Division members, Steve Cook, Shannon Cook, Charles Black, and Thom Spittle, for their work on maintaining the NFB of SC website and for revamping the RBRCCB website. He said that though the blind members can do a lot of things, blind people cannot tell how the site looks. He said that there needs to be someone with good sight to do that part of the work. He asked the board's opinion about moving the NFB of SC website from the current server to an outside server. Mr. Coppel stated that the current server host location was not doing any good for the NFB of SC. Additionally, he said that there have been some difficulties with the host too.

Dondra Bible was asked to do some research ahead of the meeting, and she presented her findings at this point in the meeting.

Dondra stated that there is a lack of communication about the sites. She said that the sites are separated and not properly channeled. She said that the sites have been difficult to control and update too. She sees lots of room for improvement. A website consists of a domain name, a host/server, and a basic design. Go Daddy is the #1 host site in the world. For \$12/year, the Federation can have its own domain name, nfbofsc.org. Go Daddy would also do the web design and hosting for \$8/month for the first year and \$15/month after the first year. Dondra stated this would be more cost-effective than having a third party host the site. Go Daddy includes search engine optimization, which drives web searches to pull up the domains that the NFB of SC purchases. It has security and daily backup features. Support staff is always available to help with the operation of the site(s). Web Press is the web publishing platform that is easy, even if someone has very little technical knowledge. Dondra volunteered to head up the project to set up and maintain nfbofsc.org. Mr. Coppel and Mr. Bible would have full access to the website. Dondra wants to form a committee with Steve Cook and others who have done the work on the website already. She would need help with making the site accessible. Lastly, Dondra mentioned incorporating the RBRCCB site into the overall design. It is currently a separate site.

Mr. Coppel offered two other options for the websites. One is to have nfb.org be the host for the NFB of SC site. The third choice is Bill White with Convergent Design. That is the host for Successful Transitions' website. Mr. White does the whole website management, content maintenance, design, etc. He also recommended consolidating the NFB webpages into one. Shannon Cook pointed out that the reason that the RBRCCB site was made separate was that a few years ago, when registering Rocky Bottom for Midlands Gives, in addition to the NFB of SC, Midlands Gives said that in order for each nonprofit to be considered separately, there needed to be distinct webpages for each. Mr. White would charge \$25 per month for each site his company maintained. For Successful Transitions, NFB of SC, and RBRCCB, the monthly cost would be \$75.

Shelley Coppel commented that each of the three options sounds viable. She posed the question as to how the board can decide. Shannon Cook observed that by having nfb.org host the site, it is not dependent on FCB staff, division/committee changes, and overall turnover within the NFB of SC. Mr. Coppel asked for thoughts from others in the room...

Steve Cook let his feelings be known at this point. He stated that, first, in all of the years coming to these board meetings, he has repeatedly asked for input from the members, whether it be for content, design, graphics, layout, and so on. Never, not once has anyone come to him to give any feedback. Second, he does not know if Go Daddy works with JAWS. Third, the current server host, Billy Irwin, is doing what he has been asked to do. Plus, there is no cost for the affiliate for his hosting. The only problem is that certain board members have personality conflicts with Mr. Irwin and simply do not wish to work with him. Mr. Bible countered that he heard that Billy's server was hacked. Steve said that that was wrong. A hack was attempted, but Mr. Irwin stopped it. Steve pointed out that any server can be hacked. Also, Billy's server hosts over 300 other sites; so, it was not just an isolated incident. The fourth point Mr. Cook made is

that he has been asking for pictures to upload to the website. Other than Linda Dizzley in the past year, David Houck, and Julie Bible, no others have sent pictures with labels identifying people, scenes, and activities. Lastly, Steve acknowledged that Mr. Coppel at least had the decency to call and ask his opinion, as one of the respected members of the NFB of SC with extensive computer knowledge, about nfb.org hosting the sites and the company hosting Successful Transitions. He said that instead, Ed has blindsided him without discussing any problems first, with alternative service providers during board meetings. Steve told Ed that the communication has to be a two-way street, not just one direction. Ed said that Steve wanted content, but no matter who has management of the sites, they will have to get content too. Ed said that Dondra can reach out to the chapters to ask for pictures, information, meeting details and other information to put on the site. Shannon and Steve both pointed out that Steve has done exactly that for years. He just recently called the chapter and division presidents. Most of the information on the lists he gets is outdated, but he still makes the effort. Frank said his main point is not to criticize what has been done. He complemented the work done on the sites recently, but wants to make sure that there is a clear direction to follow to make things even better. He wants to ensure that the site is appealing for the sighted, as well as accessible for competent blind screen reader users. Ed said that he had tried to search for Rocky Bottom using Bing. He was not able to get satisfactory results, so he felt the site is not promoted well. He said that Convergent Designs only allows for two pages on a site that they design. Mrs. Bazer said that was simply not true. For ST, they have at least six pages linked from their home page. Ed said that Go Daddy gives 100 pages. The point was made by others that for NFB of SC purposes, that many pages is overkill. Ed also argued that the NFB of SC needs to own nfbfsc.org. He incorrectly thought that Billy Irwin owned the domain name. Shannon pointed out that David Bundy retains ownership of the domain name that he personally payed for on his own initiative. She also said that this issue is a prime example of why there needs to be strong communication among the parties involved, instead of having incorrect assumptions being made. Shannon, Steve, and Jennifer voiced they are in favor of going with nfb.org to manage the website. It keeps the management with a third party, but still under the auspices of the NFB. Steve stated that the process is to reach out to the contact with NFB. Then, Billy Irwin would release the website from his server. Finally, the website would be redirected to the NFB server. That would be done behind the scenes. Frank asked if there was a consensus that the server be moved to nfb.org. Shannon Cook made a motion to do so. The motion was seconded and passed by the board. Mr. Coppel reminded everyone that this is a project that has been talked about and worked on for the past 4 years at least. He wanted to make efforts to take more direct action toward progress. Linda Dizzley offered to help with the website in any way she can. Mr. Coppel asked Steve Cook when the transition could begin to move to the NFB server. Steve said he would start the process next week.

Shelley Coppel emphasized that the core people that should be on the committee would be those who have already been involved. She gave a short list of Linda Dizzley, who just offered her help, Jennifer Bazer, Steve and Shannon Cook, Charles Black, and David Bundy. Frank asked if those people would be willing to serve. Jennifer and Shannon agreed. Jennifer pointed out the need for a variety of people who would each have a different focus from one another. Tiffany Mitchell suggested to have students on the committee as well for a more youthful perspective. President Coppel asked Steve Cook if he would be the committee chair. Steve declined.

#### State Convention Planning:

Jennifer Bazer, chair of the convention planning committee informed the board of the plans that have been made so far. On Thursday night, the Exhibit Hall will be open to encourage more vendors to sign up by giving them more time to present their products and services. Something is being planned for the students to do that evening, but as of this meeting, it is not been decided yet. Friday, the Exhibit Hall will be open from 10:00-6:00 and the normal hours on Saturday and Sunday. Division meetings and statewide committee meetings and the NFB of SC state board meeting will take place in the afternoon on Friday. The Diamond Jubilee reception will be at 7:30 p.m. There are several bands being considered. Dorothy Barksdale suggested The Root Doctors, but they are booked then. Mrs. Bazer said that the president will be giving her contact information for Second Nature, but she does not have it yet. Other bands are being contacted to check their availability. During the reception, there will be a silent auction. The inspiration for the silent auction is Able SC's annual fundable banquet. They have attendants stationed by the tables to assist participants with recording their bids. Each person entering the reception will be given a number to use for their bids, if desired. The main color of the reception decorations is Tiffany blue. Pam CheckSnider is helping with acquiring the vases for the centerpieces. Oliver Gospel Mission is actually donating the vases for the tables. That is a savings of around \$150. All funds raised during the auction will go to Rocky Bottom. Tables are available to be sponsored or bought. If a business buys a table, they will be able to have their staff, or whomever they choose, sit at their table. A sponsored table means that a table is used to advertise their business. The sponsorships and purchase of tables has no impact to those who are attending the convention and pay their registration fees. St will cover half of the food costs for the reception to help give more substantial options for this event. This will increase the per person cost from \$13 to \$20-\$25.

Saturday morning, the theme song, "Ain't No Stopping Us Now" will be performed by the ST students. President Coppel is planning a panel of previous presidents. Several potential sponsors have been contacted, such as Humanware, Vespero, and AIRA. It has been challenging to find a luncheon speaker so far. Jennifer reached out to Soda City Connectors, a Facebook group of local people for suggestions too. At the evening banquet, some sort of item will be provided as a souvenir to commemorate the 75 years of the NFB of SC in SC. Jennifer said that she has written a sponsorship letter that is available. She suggested that people personalize it to direct it to a specific person or department, not just a generic greeting. Several people said that they would like a copy of the letter to use. The outside vendors are being charged \$150 to reserve a table in the Exhibit Hall. President Coppel stated that the hotel has reserved 200 rooms for the block this year. Last year it was 170. Thursday night, there are 25 - 30 rooms available.

#### Registration Fee:

President Coppel asked if the board wanted to decide the convention registration fee at this meeting or wait another month. The board members discussed the options and agreed to decide now while everyone is together, but if an excess of sponsorship money comes in, a refund can be issued. Mr. Coppel suggested a fee of \$80 in advance or \$100 the weekend of the convention. The board agreed.

#### Las Vegas National Convention:

Tiffany Mitchell was asked to report on transportation. She said she has signed the contract for the bus company. She will send a copy to Frank and Valerie. She needs a \$400 deposit ASAP to hold the reservation. The remaining balance will be \$1700. For the 4:10 p.m. flight, everyone has paid, except for three people. The 6:30-ish flight has 44 people signed up. People on the 2<sup>nd</sup> flight have until June 6<sup>th</sup> to pay in full. At the time of this meeting, 64 will be flying out of Charlotte, 12 from Charleston, and 14 from Spartanburg. Tiffany will hold a conference call for last-minute information, such as what goes in the carry-on, the optimal size of the luggage, etc. Mr. Coppel thanked Ms. Mitchell for her hard work in coordinating and organizing the transportation for the national convention. Everyone applauded her efforts in appreciation. Mr. Coppel pointed out that, for the 64 flying out of Charlotte, their transportation from the airport to the hotel is free. In fairness, the other 36 or so should get an equivalent amount of compensation. Ideas were thrown out as to how to do that, whether it be on a debit card or cash. Ms. Mitchell and Mrs. Dizzley both pointed out that not everyone sold bus tickets. If they did not sell the minimum amount of tickets, they had to pay for their bus trip. It was decided that for those going from other airports, if they sold the minimum number of bus tickets, and register at the convention, they will receive \$50 in some form at the national convention. Tiffany said that she knew who, out of those flying, sold bus tickets and who did not. She will talk with Mr. Coppel one on one about those people.

The next board meeting will be held at the state convention at the Columbia Marriott on August 9, 2019 at 3:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned in prayer by Jennifer Bazer.

Submitted by,  
Shannon Cook  
NFB of SC Secretary