

NFB of SC  
August 9, 2019  
3:00 p.m.  
Columbia Marriott

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Coppel. Jennifer Bazer opened the meeting in prayer.

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

Members not present were Linda Dizzley, Donald Capps, and Keith Redding.

Others present were Jennifer Bazer, Casey Eubanks, Sarah Massengale, Marty McKenzie, Trent Tedder, Kenya Flores, Helen McMillan, David Bundy, Donna O'Neil, Grady Dawkins, James Byers, Vanessa Meadows, Dorothy Griffin, Stacy Etheridge, AJ McFadden, Matthew Duffell-Hoffman, Parnell Diggs, Julie Bible, Shelley Coppel, Tiffany Diaz, Patrick Mack, Jim Gashel, Susan Gashel, Herbert Boykin, Demetrius Williford, Belinda Banks, and David Houck.  
Others came in the room, but were not announced.

President Coppel asked for any board member who did not have on their NFB pin to pay \$5. Ed Bible and Debra Canty had to pay.

Mr. Coppel recognized the national representative James Gashel for comments. Mr. Gashel brought greetings from the national office. His comments were brief, as he stated that he would have much to say throughout the weekend.

Kenya Flores was also recognized for comments. Ms. Flores is a student at Furman University and holds a seat on the board of the National Association of Blind Students.

Lastly, President Coppel asked former state president Parnell Diggs to make a few remarks. Mr. Diggs reflected on his first state convention 30 years ago. He was glad to see many young people in attendance at this convention.

#### Reading and Approval of Minutes:

As is typically done at the state convention, a motion was made, by Valerie Warrington, to postpone reading of the minutes until the board's next meeting. The motion was seconded by Steve Cook and passed by the board.

#### Treasurer's Report:

Shannon Cook moved to postpone the treasurer's report until the next board meeting. Lenora Robertson seconded, and the motion was passed by the board.

#### Convention Arrangements and Announcements:

President Coppel briefed the board and attendees on this, the celebration of the NFB of SC's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He asked Jennifer Bazer to discuss the reception festivities. She chaired the planning committee that made special arrangements for the 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebration. Mrs. Bazer thanked everyone for their support and assistance with planning the activities taking place over the weekend. Mrs. Bazer described the layout of the tables, dance floor, food lines, and silent auction items. She also explained that only one door would be open; this will keep foot traffic easily manageable. There will be live music from Sight Unseen, a cash bar, and volunteers to help with describing and bidding for the silent auction items. The decorations were described as well.

#### State Convention Attendance:

President Coppel asked the group for advice on how to improve not only attendance, but getting people to stay at the convention hotel. The registration was low for both the convention as a whole, and for those staying at the Marriott. He acknowledged that the national convention in Las Vegas was more costly than most people had planned. That may have been a factor. He stated that the state convention arrangements were announced in January, so members had 8 months to plan ahead. Lenora Robertson mentioned that there is the national convention in July, the state convention in August, Fun Day a few weeks later over Labor Day weekend, and then senior camp shortly thereafter. Though the last two do not cost much, it still cannot be discounted as being a drain on time and energy with so many events right together. Someone else suggested moving the state convention back a month or so. Mr. Coppel remarked that the state convention has always been in August, ever since he got involved in 1975. He did not feel that the timing was a major factor; since, there has been strong attendance in the past. Additionally, he stated that SC is the first state convention following national. President Coppel also pointed out that moving the dates into September or October would be difficult for getting good room rates in Columbia-area hotels; since that falls in the middle of football season.

Michael Duffell-Hoffman noted that early to mid-August is better for students, rather than further into the fall. It would be much harder for students to get away to attend the convention during the semester. Shelley Coppel suggested involving chapters and divisions to assist their members financially to increase those able to attend the state convention. Sarah Massengale recommended having the convention registration be online. It is easy for most members and does not take as much time to do. Mr. Coppel informed the group that plans are in place to do just that for next year's convention registration. Mr. Diggs said that when planning a convention, the hotel determines room rates based on the expected number of attendees. When people come, but don't stay at the hotel, the organization is still responsible for paying for those rooms that were held. Belinda Banks brought up another relevant issue. For parents of school-age children, in addition to all of the events already mentioned, the parents are expected to get school supplies, clothes, etc. for their children, which is quite expensive in most cases.

#### 2020 NFB National Convention

Next year's national convention will be in Houston from June 30th-July 5<sup>th</sup>. Room rates are \$105 per night. Mr. Coppel suggested chartering a bus to get members there. It would be the most cost effective option for most who would attend. The initial recommended cost would be \$125 per person round trip. The cost for the bus is approximately \$12,000. Tiffany Mitchell suggested to set a deadline for those who are interested in riding the bus to notify the NFB of SC to ensure that enough people would be interested in taking the bus to make it worth the cost. She

suggested a deadline of the Christmas board retreat as the tentative deadline. Steve Cook asked if other bus companies were consulted for pricing. Mr. Coppel said no, but he will. Shannon Cook made the motion to have the Christmas board retreat be the deadline for a show of interest in chartering the bus to Houston. The motion was seconded and passed by the board.

2020 NFB of SC Cruise Fundraiser:

President Coppel announced that the NFB of SC is taking a cruise in 2020 to raise money for the affiliate. The pricing was reviewed. The NFB of SC gets \$50 from each person who registers. The dates are November 14-19, 2020, leaving from Charleston on the Carnival Sunshine going to the Bahamas. The deadline for deposit is September 12, 2019.

The next meeting will be at the Christmas board retreat at Rocky Bottom held December 6-8, 2019

. With all business handled, and much convention activities to be enjoyed, the meeting was adjourned in prayer by Debra Canty.

Submitted by,  
Shannon Cook  
Secretary, NFB of SC