

**NFB of SC Board Meeting Minutes
Fourth Quarter Meeting
December 5, 2020
Held both at Rocky Bottom and via Zoom**

(Note for JAWS Users: This document can be easily navigated by headings. First, turn on quick keys by pressing Insert + Z. Then you can press the letter H to take you through the minutes by heading.)

****Welcome and Roll Call:**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by President Jennifer Bazer. The meeting opened with a recording of the song, "Live the Life You Want" sung by James Aaron Brown.

NFB of SC Board members present were Debra Canty, Shannon Cook, Steve Cook, Linda Dizzley, Loretta Green, Marty McKenzie, Isaiah Nelson, Neel Sheth, Derique Simon, JW Smith, Valerie Warrington, and Demetrius Williford. Lenora Robertson was working in the kitchen, so not in the meeting.

Others present were Laverne Addison, Jamie Allison, Dorothy Barksdale, Johnny Blackwell, Carey Burris, Frank Coppel, Shelley Coppel, Parnell Diggs, Cheri Euton, Jessica Grant, David Houck, Melinda Jones, Frank Loza, Thom Spittle, and Marlon Stover.

****Approval of Minutes:**

Minutes were sent out prior to the meeting to save time. Marty McKenzie moved, Valerie Warrington seconded, and the board passed the motion to accept the minutes as read.

****Treasurer's Report:**

Valerie Warrington read the treasurer's report for the past few months. The balances are as follows.

General Fund: 5247.23. Included in that amount is the allocation for the BELL Program of \$2183.70. The unrestricted amount in the general fund is approximately \$3100. The bus fund had \$2124 in it. The name of the fund has changed to the National Convention Transportation Fund, since very few people show an interest in traveling by bus to national conventions anymore. The fund will still assist members with their expenses associated with attending the national NFB convention, but now it can be used for

their preferred method of travel. Several people clarified some information read in the report. Valerie made note of the corrections and will adjust the report to reflect those corrections. JW Smith moved, Steve Cook seconded, and the board voted to approve the treasurer's report as read with corrections.

****PayPal:**

Donations and dues are now payable via PayPal. President Bazer asked those present to remind their local members that a 3% charge is added per transaction, so including that in the amount paid will increase the overall funds for the NFB of SC.

****Pre-Authorized Contribution (PAC):**

Frank Coppel, chair of the Doing Our Fair Share Committee, reported on plans to help promote and support the PAC Program in South Carolina. South Carolina is currently in 13th place nationally in the PAC rankings. From January 1 to May 31, 2021, two drawings will be held, with a \$100 prize for each drawing. Those who increase their PAC will be entered in one of the drawings, or those who sign up as a new donor will be entered in the second drawing. Currently, South Carolina has 51 people who give to PAC each month, with an individual donor average of \$17.41 monthly. He also reminded attendees that chapters and divisions can contribute to PAC, not just individuals. The minimum donation is \$5. Mr. Coppel said that SC gives \$888 to PAC monthly. Ohio is in 10th place and gives \$260 more than SC. President Bazer suggested increasing the amount of the NFB of SC PAC from \$50 to \$75 each month. Steve Cook moved, Debra Canty seconded, and the board passed the motion to increase to \$75 each month. Ike Nelson asked if a person could donate a one-time donation instead of monthly withdrawals. The board members said that PAC is a monthly program, but if someone wants to donate now and then, they could donate to SUN. Mr. Coppel gave the different methods for donors to sign up on PAC. Debra Canty asked if her members increased in December, would it count. Mrs. Bazer said she could have the PAC report run from December 2020 through May 31, 2021

****Statewide Seminar:**

The statewide seminar will be held on January 9, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. It will be hosted both in-person and on Zoom. Those who are interested in being present at the Federation Center should let David Houck

know. The FCB will want to maintain social distancing, and not overcrowd the facility. Board meetings will be held during the lunch break.

****NFB Logo Items:**

Mr. Smith requested to know who has an NFB logo item on for this meeting. It is customary for the board members to be either wearing or using an item with the NFB logo on it. It can be a membership coin, a travel mug, a pin, T-shirt, etc. Those caught without their logo item pay a \$5 fee that goes to the NFB of SC treasury. Mrs. Bazer said that she will start that back in January; since, there are a number of new board members who may not yet have a logo item. And the Pins are no longer available from the national office. The board members did go around and report if they had a logo item on or in their possession.

****Membership:**

Mrs. Bazer pointed out that our membership has increased very recently. Our members pledge to participate actively. The national office of the National Federation of the Blind states that to be an active member, one must attend at least one major event each year. A major event is defined as a state or national convention. Of course, chapter and/or division meetings are essential. The NFB of SC needs people to take an interest in programs and get involved. There are 18 committees. A list can be reviewed on nfbofsc.org. Also, the membership application can be found there as well. Dues should be paid by December 31 of each year. The list of state members is due at the national center by January 31. President Bazer suggested a review of the state constitution and possibly change the deadline for having dues paid to December 31 instead of January 31. She requested chapter presidents get with their district rep to aid members with submitting their dues on time.

****New Member Orientation:**

New members need to learn about the Federation. Once each quarter, the NFB of SC plans to have a New Member Orientation to explain the structure and philosophy of the organization both nationally and statewide. Jennifer asked for other ideas on items to include in the orientation. Shannon Cook suggested including NFB resources. Mrs. Bazer asked if the board thought this would be an hour long session, or one hour a week for four weeks, for example. Steve Cook suggested giving the new members reading materials in their preferred format. He said that the new members have to invest their

time too. At the next session, the group could discuss points in the assigned material. Loretta Green asked for clarification on whether each hour-long session would cover different topics, or would the meetings tackle topics as they come up. The number of orientations held each year would be based on the need. Neel Sheth recommended that a veteran member could speak with a new member one on one to help tease out any questions they may have pertaining to membership or the NFB as a whole. The mentoring partnership would remain in place for about the first 12-18 months that someone is learning about the Federation. . The board agreed to have the first orientation consist of two one-hour sessions. The parameters will be tweaked as required. Mrs. Bazer plans to begin doing new member orientation in January. At the end, a small survey could be administered to see what people liked and what they did not. Other ideas posed included asking people why they want to be in the Federation and what skills/talents do they bring – Ike Nelson. Shannon Cook stated that it would be helpful to ask long-time members what has kept them in the federation, not just what brought them in. President Bazer asked the Membership Committee to tackle planning the orientation with her. Mrs. Bazer also wants to begin doing something similar for leaders.

****NFB of SC Board Meeting Frequency:**

President Bazer suggested meeting every other month to keep the meeting times shorter and to disseminate information in a timelier manner.

****Leadership Seminar and Mentoring:**

The board settled on holding the 2021 NFB of SC Leadership Seminar on April 10, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in a hybrid format. President Bazer also wants to have leadership mentoring throughout the year too. Mentoring could be helping a flailing chapter get back up and running. It could be guiding new members and leaders on strategies for chapter management. There are many possibilities, and she welcomes everyone's thoughts and input as to the direction this periodic guidance would move. Speaking of chapter revitalization, the Florence Chapter will be having an interest meeting on Monday, December 7, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. at Golden Corral. Mrs. Bazer will be there in addition to around 15 people who have responded.

****Chapter Constitutions:**

President Riccobono asked that copies of all chapter and division constitutions be submitted to the national office by November 15, 2020. Many chapters and divisions have not yet done so yet. Due to needed corrections in wording, punctuation, spelling, etc., Mrs. Bazer has made those corrections in advance of submission. It is essential that the constitutions across the state be reviewed, updated, and sent to the Federation center for record keeping purposes. Corrections need to reflect the model constitution. It is helpful that each chapter and division constitution be consistent with wording, intent, and so forth. Any amendments to constitutions require resubmission to the national office for approval. Dues and number of board positions may vary among chapters and divisions. Another area for clarification, is to include a description of duties for each board officer.

In the short term, since the constitutions are already two weeks late being submitted to the national office, the most important thing is to get the updated constitution submitted to the state office with the correct list of board positions ASAP. Once the constitutions are sent to Baltimore, each chapter can work on fine tuning their constitution to accurately reflect the operation of their respective chapters. To make the action official, Shannon Cook moved that the chapters immediately submit their constitutions with the amount of chapter dues and number and positions of board members included. The motion was seconded and passed by the board.

Mrs. Bazer asked the chapters and divisions to include her on email messages when meeting minutes or notes are sent to members.

Also, whatever the meeting frequency is stated in the constitution, it is important that the chapter or division adhere to the guidelines stated therein. If meetings are no longer held with the same frequency as stated in the current constitution, it may be prudent to review that information and make amendments to reflect the true frequency of the meetings.

****Mileage Reimbursement Change:**

Earlier today, the Rocky Bottom board voted to do away with mileage reimbursements for the following reasons. First, it is required in 2020 that a person receiving mileage reimbursement submit a 1099 Form to the IRS with their taxes. Additionally, the amount will be taxed at 24%. Mrs. Bazer recommended that the NFB of SC board adopt the same as Rocky Bottom; to do away with mileage reimbursement. She said that it would help out the

treasurer; since the extra work would fall to her. The board then discussed the pros and cons. Isaiah Nelson asked when this would be in effect. Mrs. Bazer said that it would effect any reimbursement that would be paid for this weekend's trip. Mr. Nelson said that he has attended the Christmas Board Retreat for years and customarily got reimbursement. Parnell Diggs offered two observations. One is that many members hire drivers to attend board meetings. By not having the reimbursement, their attendance could be uncertain. Alternatively, with Zoom being heavily utilized, it does make it easy for anyone to attend meetings. Mr. Diggs suggested in the future, considering taking a van for those who may need a ride. Mrs. Bazer asked what the board wanted to do about these two situations. Mrs. Warrington said that even though mileage reimbursement is now considered income, gas reimbursement is considered an expense and therefore not taxable. Gas reimbursement can be claimed as long as the claimant provides receipts. Jennifer asked what the board would like to do. David Houck asked if the mileage could be included as food expense; since Mr. Nelson bought and brought a significant part of the food for the weekend. Just for clarity's sake, Mrs. Bazer said that the two issues to be decided are what to do long term for mileage reimbursement, and how to cover the cost for Mr. Nelson for this weekend, since he was unaware of this change in federal law, having not had any in-person board meetings up to now in 2020. Steve Cook moved and Linda Dizzley seconded a motion to do away with mileage and gas reimbursement. Discussion followed. Isaiah Nelson wanted to know what could be done on a state level to offset the cost of transportation for those who cannot afford the travel expense. He suggested possibly setting up a fund for those expenses. Shannon Cook suggested having the board members ask their respective chapters for their sponsorship to get to and from board meetings. This would offset the cost for the state affiliate. Mr. Cook disagreed with Mrs. Cook's suggestion. He asserted that, since board members are elected to the positions, they should exhibit leadership qualities, and not expect special benefits. That is not fair to those non-board members who attend the board meetings as well. Mrs. Bazer called for a vote on the motion on the floor. It passed. Mrs. Bazer said that she will work with Isaiah to be sure he is comfortable with the outcome. She may give him a gift card in an amount to cover his needs. They will confer later and agree on a suitable resolution.

****Reminders:**

- **The Thanks For Giving Box is still outside the Federation Center for another week. Please give. The donated items will go to members in need.**

- **The next Connects meeting will be on December 17, 2020.**
- **The Statewide Seminar will be our next in-person/Zoom meeting.**
- **The Christmas Celebration will be on December 12, 2020 at noon at the Federation Center. All are welcome. Please let Jennifer know if you plan to attend to ensure room for social distancing and to be sure enough food is prepared. There may be a Zoom simulcast.**

****Linda Bible:**

President Bazer let the NFB of SC board know that Linda Bible was presented with a cake and an envelope of money collected to wish her a happy retirement. Approximately \$250 was contributed by RBRCCB and NFB of SC boards, as well as other members. Those present also sang Happy Birthday to her, since her birthday is on December 19. Mrs. Bazer wanted to let both boards know, since, many on the NFB of SC board donated to the funds.

****Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be held on January 9, 2021 during the statewide seminar lunch break.

****Adjournment:**

The meeting ended with the song, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" by The Muppets. The meeting was adjourned by President Bazer.

**Submitted by,
Shannon Cook
NFB of SC Secretary**