

NFB of SC Special Board Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2020

****Welcome and Roll Call:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Frank Coppel. Debra Canty opened the meeting in prayer.

NFB of SC Board members present were Jamie Allison, Ed Bible, Debra Canty, Shannon Cook, Steve Cook, Frank Coppel, Linda Dizzley, Loretta Green, Tiffany Mitchell, Garrett Mosley, Isaiah Nelson, Lenora Robertson, Derique Simon, JW Smith, and Valerie Warrington. Others present were Laverne Addison, Belinda Banks, Dorothy Barksdale, Jennifer Bazer, Charlis Borodin, Carey Burris, Shelley Coppel, David Houck, Lashanda Pressley (?), Mary Sonksen, Thom Spittle, Tomeki Williams, Demetrius Williford, and Pat Wolthoff.

****Minutes and Treasurer's Report:**

Lenora Robertson moved to dispense with the minutes and Treasurer's Report for this meeting. The motion was seconded and passed by the board.

****Meeting Purpose:**

The purpose of this special meeting is to decide if the state convention will be held in person or virtually.

****Hotel:**

President Coppel reviewed the hotel's policies regarding cancellation or decreasing the number of attendees.

- The Marriott will not hold us to the room block previously designated. The block can be reduced.
- Instead of the original food cost of \$13,000, the NFB of SC would only have to spend \$5200 or 40% of the original.
- All food served would be done by hotel staff – no buffets would be allowed.
- No hotel staff would enter rooms for cleaning while there, but fresh towels could be obtained. The convention duration could be reduced to Friday and Saturday only.
- Cancellation could be done as late as August 7, 2020.
- If the convention is totally cancelled, the NFB of SC would have to pay \$25,900 to the hotel. The NFB of SC could reschedule for 2022; since, the 2021 convention is already scheduled to be in Charleston next year.

The drawbacks of hosting an in-person convention would be issues with social distancing, especially on elevators. The meeting room would be fairly easy to distance with seating being spaced farther apart, fewer tables, and expecting fewer attendees. Mr. Coppel stated that if the convention is in person, face masks and hand sanitizer will be provided to each person for free.

President Coppel asked the board and guests for questions. Pat Wolthoff asked if elections would still be held. Mr. Coppel said they would. In the convention was held in person, the chapter and division reports would be left off of the program, and the business meeting including elections

would be conducted in the late afternoon session on Saturday. Shannon Cook asked why we would end the convention early. Mr. Coppel said that it would be less opportunity to spread the pandemic among attendees. Isaiah Nelson asked how we could reduce exposure at the elevators. Frank stated that the Marriott said they would use marshalls to monitor the traffic flow to keep people apart and limit the number on at one time. Charlis Borodin asked how many people makes a majority to vote. He replied that it would need to be 50 people voting to make a quarrim. She asked if only 50 people would decide the presidency. Mr. Coppel explained that the turnout for conventions in recent years has been dwindling, and those present on Sunday mornings has only been between 60 and 80. So, we would not be in much different circumstances than in the past.

Linda Dizzley stated that the medical field experts expect a second wave to hit in August. She asked if the hotel would hold us to the contract if the pandemic worsens. Mr. Coppel said they would not. Steve Cook mentioned that people would be touching tables, chairs, microphones and such at the head table, and many other places as we move into and out of the meeting hall. Frank said that the hotel would be having the podium and microphone wiped off with Clorox wipes between speakers. Pat Wolthoff suggested having hotel staff or others guide people to their chairs to help reduce touching so many surfaces. Mr. Nelson suggested giving out disposable gloves. Charlis Borodin said that was not a good idea, because people just leave them out and don't dispose of them correctly. Mr. Nelson replied that people could also receive a bag for their trash. Carey Burris pointed out that some people may have had illnesses that they have not disclosed, and given the age of many of our members, that puts them at very high risk. He said this may be much too soon to get out in the public like this. Lenora Robertson reported having read where hotels were only allowing

One person on an elevator at a time, so that would create a problem in getting people to and from their rooms. Mrs. Robertson said that in addition, hotels would not allow people to wait in the lobby. She wondered how our group would be able to wait for elevators, or rides, if not allowed to wait in the lobby.

**Virtual Convention:

Mr. Coppel expressed several concerns about having a virtual convention. He has visited many chapters who have held their meetings on Zoom. It is a big problem for people to get signed in for those meetings. If the number is not in their contact list, or if numbers have to be pressed after dialing, it is very difficult for them. Mr. Coppel asked Thom Spittle and Steve Cook to explain the proposed voting method. Thom said that the voting could be done through the Call Em All service that the NFB of SC is already using for meeting reminders and notices. A call would be made, and the person would choose from the options offered. The Call Em All site would tabulate the results, giving a percentage of votes for each nominee. It would be ideal to do the voting this way during the lunch break. It could take a little while for each election. If no clear winner is established with three or more nominees, the one with the lowest number of votes will drop off, and the call will be done again. The benefit is that it is private. The drawback is the time involved. The voter would have to be both registered and a dues-paying member. A potential issue is if two members are at the same phone number. Charlis Borodin proposed having a mail-in paper ballot. That idea was dismissed right away primarily because the NFB of SC Constitution states that there will be no proxy voting. People have to vote during the election, not before. Also, a paper ballot is not accessible to the membership. Mr. Coppel said that the nominating committee would meet prior to the state convention that has yet to be determined. Additionally, the nominations from the floor would be done prior to the convention. The ballot has to be set up in advance to set it up on Call Em All. Mr. Coppel asked the board if they thought people would call in on Sunday to vote, or if they would likely skip it. The board as a group thought there would be much less participation on Sunday. Linda Dizzley asked if anyone could attend the nominating committee meeting. Mr. Coppel said that meeting would be closed to anyone who is not a member of that committee. That meeting could be assigned a pass code to eliminate anyone not asked to be there.

****The Vote:**

Secretary Shannon Cook took a roll call vote at the request of the president. Votes were as follows:

Lenora Robertson – Virtual

Debra Canty – Deferred to the end, but voted virtual.

Shannon Cook – Virtual

Valerie Warrington – Virtual

Jamie Allison – Virtual

Ed Bible – In Person

Steve Cook – Virtual

Linda Dizzley – Virtual

Loretta Green – In Person

Tiffany Mitchell – Virtual

Garrett Mosley – Virtual

Isaiah Nelson – Virtual

*Derique Simon – Virtual

JW Smith – Virtual

*Derique Simon said that he voted virtual with the stipulation that the voting method be done with tech savvy people in a way that produces solid and concrete results, so there will be no ifs, ands, or buts about the outcome.

The results were 12 in favor of virtual; 2 for in person. The state convention will be held virtually.

Mr. Coppel said he will call the Marriott tomorrow and cancel this year's reservation. The NFB of SC will reschedule for 2022 at that hotel. The room rates will go up by a few dollars more per night in 2022.

****National Representative for State Convention:**

Frank suggested asking Mr. Riccobono if Pam Allen could be our national rep for our state convention this year. The board had no objections, and voted unanimously to ask for her to be the rep.

****In-Person NFB Meetings:**

President Coppel informed those gathered that the ban on in-person meetings has been lifted by President Riccobono. He said that he will leave it up to chapter presidents if they feel comfortable having meetings in person at this time.

Thom Spittle informed the board that the CSTD will have meetings to help plan for the virtual state convention. Thom said that he'd include the NFB of SC Board in on the CSTD meeting notices, in case anyone wants to participate in the planning process. Those plans could change after the national convention, if we adopt some of their ideas. The national office has offered to help affiliates who may need it. The registration form will be put online in a few days. People can get help from either David Houck, Steve Cook, or Shannon Cook to help with filling out their online registration form. The board agreed to follow the national convention, and make the state convention registration free. Shannon Cook reminded the group that in order to vote, besides preregistering for the convention, people must make sure their state dues have been paid. The deadline is July 1, 2020 for dues. The deadline to preregister is

July 31, 2020. Frank said he will be sending out a letter to the membership by the end of the week with all of the info for the convention included.

JW Smith asked about how donations will be taken at the convention. That will be determined, but if people want to send them in ahead of time, it will make things easier. JW also asked about using an Alexa device to stream the convention on Zoom. Steve Cook said that you could do that, and explained how to dial in via Zoom using Alexa.

****Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be held on August 21, 2020 during the state convention via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned by President Coppel.

Submitted by,
Shannon Cook
NFB of SC Secretary