# ACB Board of Directors Meeting Minutes: January 23, 2020

The January 23, 2020 conference call meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Council of the Blind was called to order at 8:05 PM by President Dan Spoone.

## Call to Order and Roll Call

At the call of the roll, the following Board members were present: Dan Spoone, Ray Campbell, Denise Colley, David Trott, Kim Charlson, Jeff Bishop, Donna Browne, Sara Conrad, Dan Dillon, Katie Frederick, Jim Kracht, Doug Powell, Pat Sheehan, Michael Talley and Jeff Thom. Board of Publications Member Deb Cook Lewis was present representing that body.

Board members absent: Mark Richert.

Staff present: Eric Bridges, ACB Executive Director, and Nancy Marks-Becker, ACB Chief Financial Officer.

Guest: Janet Dickleman, ACB convention coordinator.

## Approval of Agenda: Dan Spoone, President

President Spoone reviewed the agenda. Powell moved and Campbell seconded adoption of the agenda as amended to move the report of the convention coordinator up on the agenda to follow the approval of the minutes and then the executive session. The motion carried.

## Review and Approval of Fall and Budget Board of Directors Meeting Minutes: Denise Colley, Secretary

Due to the lateness in getting out the minutes for the fall 2019 and two November 2019 budget calls there was discussion around not having had the ability to thoroughly read and review them. Kracht moved and Powell seconded a motion to table approval of minutes at this time to be brought back for approval at the February 2020 board meeting. The motion carried.

## ACB Conference and Convention Update: Janet Dickelman, Convention Committee Chair

Janet reported that the convention steering committee has approved not charging affiliates or committees for any microphones or ALDs as well as session recording fees. They have asked affiliates not to charge for their session events unless the event is a food function. Affiliates are also being asked not to do the affiliate packages because those are also very labor intensive. In response to feedback from the 2019 convention survey, Monday morning’s general session is going to be structured a little differently. The scholarship presentation will be moved to just before break, allowing for picture taking during the break. Following break will be three concurrent breakout sessions; one on audio description, one on legislation and one talking about accessibility for the home. These concurrent breakout sessions will run until the end of general session.

## Executive Session: Dan Spoone

It was moved by Campbell and seconded by Trott that the board move into executive session for purposes of discussion on financial legal matters. The motion carried.

It was moved by Campbell and seconded by Trott that the board return to open session. The motion carried. President Spoone reported that financial and legal matters were discussed in executive session but no motions were taken.

## Mission Moment: Dan Spoone and Eric Bridges

Eric reported that there has been a ton of work done over the past several months with regard to the scholarship program. Last year the ability for scholarship applicants to apply online was introduced, and this year we are introducing the ability for the review, scoring an selection process conducted by scholarship committee members to be done online. Nancy Becker has been instrumental in steering the behind the scenes work with the scholarship committee co-chairs and the web developer to make this process work. Eric also reported that, back in 2018 he had a meeting with AFB to talk about the scholarship program they have had for a number of years and their desire to have someone take the administration of this on for them. ACB was asked if we would be interested in taking this on as part of our broader scholarship program. SO ACB has entered into a negotiation with AFB over the past year to work out all of the details. This year we will have quite a bit more funding to give away to ACB scholarship winners because many of these additional scholarships are being combined with existing scholarships we will now be able to increase the dollar amounts. We will have an extra $27,500 to award. Eric thanked Nancy for doing all of the labor intensive work that has gone into improving the scholarship program. Nancy shared that, typically, we have awarded 18 to 19 scholarships and we are actually only increasing by about 2 scholarships, but the amount is increasing. This is due to the efficiency that has gone into combining like areas of study and eligibility requirements. Scholarship amounts will now range from $2,000 to $7500 with the average range between $4500 and $5,000.

## President’s Report: Dan Spoone

### NLS Update – Omnibus Bill

Dan reported on a meeting that Eric, Clark and he had with Karen Keninger, NLS director. In the Omnibus Bill which passed Congress right at the end of last year, all of the funding areas NLS was working for through Congress were basically included. The language to clear up copyright and bring down all the barriers for the United States and NLS to participate openly in the Marrakesh Treaty was included. The braille device e-reading program was funded for the next five years at $2,750,000 per year. They will be starting with a pilot program this next year that will be focused in four regional libraries. In addition to that, NLS is going to offer approximately twenty of the devices to ACB to give out to selected members for testing and evaluation. Karen is also asking to have a focus group at convention for attendees to be able to come in and experience the devices and provide feedback. NLS also received $5,000,000 a year over the next three years for IT improvements with a lot of this funding to be focused on increasing the capacity, size and functionality of the BARD system.

### Code of Conduct – Ad Hoc Committee Formed

An ad hoc committee has been put together to work over the next four weeks reviewing our draft code of conduct and finalizing the language. This will then be presented back to the Board for review and approval. This ad hoc committee includes representation from the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, the ACB Board, affiliate presidents, the convention coordinator and staff. Dan was reminded that the commitment was made to the membership at convention that there would be an opportunity for people to see the final draft and have a conference call to make any comments. Dan will include this as part of the finalization process.

### Nine Program Steering Committees

Dan reported that following the fall board meeting a meeting was held with all of the committee chairs to introduce them to the nine program steering committees, their composition and what the goals and objectives are. At the present time seven of the committees have had at least one meeting. The feedback he has received seems very positive and there seems to be a lot of energy within the committees and they are seeing the opportunity to work collaboratively with each other.

### Friday, February 21 Training Workshop

The Friday training workshop prior to the February board meeting will be from 9am to 5pm. In the morning there will be a presentation from Bill Reeder who works at George Mason University and has spent a career in development and fundraising. He will walk us through some of his experiences and the basics of fundraising and development. After lunch Cindy Van Winkle will give a presentation related to the board affiliate liaison program and the guidelines and some ways to collect data that they have developed. We will end the day with a conversation with an external consultant from Mount Vernon Consulting about our nine program steering committees and how to establish SMART objectives, the roles and responsibilities, and the do’s and don’ts of functioning successfully.

### EOS (Entrepreneur Operating System) Traction Workshops Scheduled

Part of the budget that was approved this year was to bring in a consultant to help us implement the EOS (Entrepreneurial Operating System) Traction Program. Dan and Eric have contracted through Vision Serv Alliance with Lee Nasehi who is a certified Traction Methodology trainer. A leadership team consisting of representation from staff and the board has been identified and three initial workshops scheduled. This is a process that takes about two years to roll out. It starts with the leadership team, down to the program steering committees, and then finally down to our committees and program activities. Dan encouraged the board to get a book entitled Traction by Gino Wickman which will walk readers through the EOS methodology.

### Google funding for the UniD Project

Dan reported that we received notification from Google that they have approved $50,000 in funding for the UniD Project with the National Parks Service, University of Hawaii and ACB.

It was moved by Trott and seconded by Campbell to approve the president’s report. The motion carried.

## Executive Director’s Report: Eric Bridges

### Mark Schultz – Acting RSA Commissioner

Eric, Clark and Claire attended a meeting at the US Department of Education with Mark Schultz who is the acting Rehab Services Administration Commissioner. The purpose of the meeting was for Mark to learn more about the blind community and what is going on within the ACB membership pertaining to vocational rehabilitation, preemployment services, etc. Eric said the meeting turned out to be more positive than he had anticipated. Mr. Schultz actually asked them what ACB really wanted to know from him, and a blunt discussion ensued about the lack of VR services for the blind community. Eric felt like it was a good conversation and they were able to share a lot of concerns. They discussed issues around how to help people who have just lost their vision and the negative experiences for blind people with centers for independent living, and he wants to work with us to make that better. He has also agreed to come to the legislative seminar and speak.

Kim expressed the concern we all have about knowing that the majority of people in this country who are blind are older individuals and the funding for them is so out of proportion to what is needed, and yet there is a mandate from RSA to put aside 15% for PRE-ETS. This is a small percentage of children when the older individuals who are blind are getting a fraction of what they need. Eric said this was brought up in their discussion and Mr. Schultz responded that RSA hasn’t taken a look at the older blind program and the Pre-ETS can get out of control in individual states.

### ACB Job Postings

On January 10 the job posting for the Director of Development went out on all of our lists, our job bank and website. It is also appearing for one month in the Chronicle of Philanthropy. VisionServe Alliance has also put it in their newsletter. To date we have received about seven applications. Recruiting is also being done for the position vacated by Nicole Beito and Nancy has received many applications. Jason Castonguay and Debbie Hazelton have joined the ACB Radio team as contractors.

### Other

Eric reported that staff made a visit to the hotel we will be using in February and were able to meet with the senior management. The layout of the hotel seems pretty easy overall.

It was moved by Trott and seconded by Frederick to accept the executive director’s report. The motion carried.

## Input for President’s meeting Agenda

Dan asked that if anyone had topics they would like covered at the president’s meeting to let him know. We will have our four breakout sessions, and Lee Nasehi will be sharing about VisionServe Alliance. Staff are finalizing a speaker for lunch. There will also be a good panel discussion about the next level of using Zoom, beyond the basics, which we did last year.

There being no further business it was moved by Campbell and seconded by Sheehan to adjourn. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55pm EST.

Denise Colley

Secretary

Date submitted: February 12, 2020

Date approved: February 22, 2020