# **Conference Call Meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Council of the Blind**

# **August 22, 2019**

**The August 22, 2019 conference call meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Council of the Blind was called to order at 8:33 p.m. by President Dan Spoone.**

## **Call to Order, Roll Call, Review and Approval of Agenda, and Adoption of Minutes**

**At the call of the roll, the following board members were present: Dan Spoone, Mark Richert, 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.**

**Staff present: Eric Bridges, ACB Executive Director, Clark Rachfal, ACB Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs and Nancy Marks-Becker, ACB Chief Financial Officer.**

**President Spoone reviewed the agenda. Powell moved and Campbell seconded adoption of the agenda as presented; the motion carried.**

**President Spoone introduced his idea of having a Mission Moment at each board meeting to highlight a board member or a leader or an accomplishment that ACB has undertaken and provided for our membership since the previous board meeting. He said that there was nobody more deserving of this first Mission Moment than Jeff Bishop and the work he has done for ACB radio filling in during the absence of Larry Turnbull. He has done an outstanding job of keeping ACB radio and our IT servers going. Dan then turned things over to Eric Bridges to provide more detail. Since early May Eric has been working closely with Jeff to collect all the necessary information ACB has organizationally needed in order to maintain our presence on the internet. In June and July we experienced outages with the ACB email lists, ACB.org and ACB radio servers, and it was through the efforts of Jeff and his team working closely with the Louisville Web Group that everything was able to be restored.**

## **President’s Report – Dan Spoone**

**This year approximately 80% of all of our convention volunteers in Rochester were from the JW.org group and they have done an outstanding job for us. ACB has learned that one of our close colleagues in Nepal had worked with the widow of the previous prime minister of Nepal to put together a blind summit for the blind/visually impaired community there. This will be a one day session on September 8th which will include 150 blind/visually impaired consumers from a lot of their advocacy organizations, as well as government officials, corporate executives, doctors and the university system. One of the things they reached out to ACB on was to learn more about audio description. Since Joel Snyder was already planning to be in India in September he adjusted his calendar and will be presenting at their conference. Dan was also able to record a short video introducing ACB that will be played and translated into Nepoli. Thirdly, one of our members from Hawaii who comes to our convention each year to speak about the national parks service project with the University of Hawaii grew up in Nepal and is going to be skyped in to tell her story. Katie asked if we have a copy of the Utube video with her testimonial that could be shared with the Board and Dan will send the link out. In all, 9 hours and 45 minutes around the world ACB will have a large presence at this blind summit.**

**The World Blind Union North American/Caribbean Regional meeting is being held on September 27th at the Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The leadership of this region will be changing due to term limits, and Kim has been approached about running for the position of president, which would provide the opportunity for ACB to have more of a leadership role within the World Blind Union. Kim has agreed to run, and Mark Riccobono is going to be nominating her. The following meeting will be the WBU General Assembly next June in Madrid, Spain. Powell moved and Thom seconded a motion for ACB to express its support for Kim’s nomination as president of the World Blind Union North American/Caribbean Region. The motion carried.**

**President Spoone publicly thanked Rick Morin, Kelly Gasque and Nancy Becker for all their work on putting together the convention survey very quickly. To date, we have had 207 people who have started the survey and 180 who’ve completed it, which is well over 85% completion rate. The survey will be closing on August 31, so he will have Kelly send out one final email reminder the first of the week.**

**Dan and Kim have been working on the finalization of the committee chairs and committee members and a few of the committees have been completed. Dan is working with Kelly and Nancy to send out a general solicitation letter on Constant Contact to all members asking them for any interest in serving on committees. All committees will be finalized by the end of September. Once finalized, the committee list in its entirety will be sent out to the board.**

**The board liaison assignments for this year have been sent out and Dan asked if there were any questions or concerns. About 90% of them haven’t changed that much from last year. Affiliate presidents will again be notified about their board liaison and the board liaison will be CC’d to let them know when their affiliate presidents have been notified. It was pointed out that when affiliate presidents are notified might also be a good opportunity to ask them about any of their board members that they would like to add to the leadership list or if they have recommendations from their membership for committees.**

## **Executive Director’s Report – Eric Bridges**

**On August 5 Eric was invited by JP Morgan to a reception held in Washington, D.C. This reception was an opportunity to meet with the senior leadership team of JPMorgan Chase. About 75 to 100 people were in attendance. The chairman and CEO of JPMorgan spoke as well as other members of the senior leadership team. The emphasis was on economic development and investing, as well as supporting community partners, which was the reason ACB was invited. Eric had the opportunity to meet the CEO and talk with him briefly about the relationship that has developed over the last five years between ACB and JPMorgan Chase, and a little about who we are as an organization. He also had the opportunity to meet with the head of Corporate Responsibility in the Office of Nonprofit Engagement, the division of JPMorgan from which we receive our grants annually. Eric was able to share with him about what we’ve been doing with their financial support. While there, Eric also had the opportunity to do a five-minute interview with the Communications section to highlight some of the diverse ways we have been able to utilize the grant funding. This interview will be used through the course of the rest of this year in the Office of Nonprofit Engagement and at the senior leadership level.**

**We have now pulled together a five-person advisory board that will grow, but we can now begin doing the work that we have agreed to do. They are all individuals who have subject matter expertise in areas that are not currently within the organization from an FTE standpoint. The five members include Lee Nasehi, the new CEO of VisionServe Alliance, Matt Ater, VP of Corporate Business Development at Vispero, Brett Humphrey, a developer at Microsoft, Matt Handley, a private practice attorney formerly with the Washington Lawyers’ Committee and Erin Pitera, the CEO of FMP Consulting. Both Matt Ater and Brett Humphrey are visually impaired, and 4 of the 5 were at our 2019 convention. Their first face-to-face meeting will be October 9th at the ACB Alexandria office.**

**There is a lot of discussion swirling around about digital accessibility and Eric, Clark, and Claire met with the House Small Business Committee because they have been receiving a lot of messages from concerned small businesses that have been in receipt of demand letters about inaccessible websites. They were interested in knowing where ACB stood with all of this, and are looking at potentially holding a hearing this fall where accessibility could be a component of the hearing. We expressed an interest in helping them out and providing them with any information we can.**

**This topic generated discussion around the whole issue of digital accessibility, and that one key message we want to make sure we are reinforcing with outsiders and our own membership is that in acknowledging that there are those out there who may exploit the system, the problem isn’t with the ADA and there are other remedies outside of amending the ADA to address these issues. Mark suggested that it might be appropriate to develop a standard set of 3 to 5 bullet points that are the stock answer that expresses ACB’s position. This could be just some general messaging that we could circulate as needed. Eric, Kim, Clark and Claire are going to be meeting to talk about this very issue as it pertains to Kim’s presentation on the panel at the press club, and what they will be putting together should also be of assistance to more than just this event. That work product could be shared with those on this board who are interested.**

## **Approval of Convention Board Meeting Minutes – Ray Campbell**

**The minutes of the July 5, 2019 board meeting were sent out with corrections and attachments.  Frederick moved and Kracht seconded a motion to approve the July 5, 2019 meeting minutes as corrected. Motion carried.**

## **Approval of Colorado Council of the Visually Impaired and Blind Affiliate Charter - Ray Campbell**

**Ray reported on the outcome of the work he and a working group made up of representatives of the ACB Board and the Colorado Council of the Visually Impaired and Blind to address the concerns the Board had with the CCVIB bylaws that were reviewed and discussed during our July meeting. The two main concerns were that they had a provision where they could deny people full membership, and that it appeared there could be a situation where a sighted person could be acting as chair, both of which go against the ACB Constitution and Bylaws. In the meantime, Ray received a revised set of bylaws which appeared to address our concerns, and which he was assured had been adopted by the CCVIB board. Both Ray’s report and the revised CCVIB bylaws were sent out to this board previously.**

**Campbell moved and Richert seconded a motion that the ACB Board of Directors charter the Colorado Council of the Visually Impaired and Blind as the state affiliate to ACB from the state of Colorado. Motion carried.**

## **Review and Prioritization of the 2019 Resolutions - Eric Bridges and Clark Rachfal**

**The prioritization of the 2019 resolutions done by the co-chairs of the Resolutions Committee, the chair of the Advocacy Services Committee and staff was sent out to the board for review prior to this meeting. They have been prioritized in terms of how the staff should approach them. Some will need more attention than others from staff to make positive strides, and others can be best served by being worked at the member, affiliate and committee level. Currently there are 4 resolutions prioritized as #1, 4 as #2 and the remainder as #3. There were 3 resolutions that were referred directly to the board. No questions or concerns were expressed about the priority one and priority two resolutions. Kim expressed some concern about the language around the recommendation of the census resolution. The concern is around the sentence in the notes that says “this resolution acknowledges there is no way to impact the 2020 census”. While no one would disagree that things are pretty poor when it comes to how the disability community has not been included in the census planning process, there are still ways to have an impact. Clark was fine to change the language to say limited impact on the 2020 census.**

**Campbell moved and Thom seconded that the board adopt the resolutions priorities as amended.  Motion carried.**

## **Election of the Budget and Executive Committees**

**David Trott, Kim Charlson and Patrick Sheehan were nominated to serve as the voting members of the budget committee. Thom moved and Frederick seconded a motion to elect the 3 nominated members as a group to serve on the budget committee. Motion carried.**

**Officers elected to serve on the executive committee are Dan Spoone, Mark Richert and Kim Charlson. The two board members elected to serve on the executive committee are Katie Frederick and Patrick Sheehan.**

## **Executive Session**

**Campbell moved and Bishop seconded a motion that the Board move into executive session for discussion of a personnel matter. Motion carried.**

**Campbell moved and Powell seconded a motion that the Board return to open session. Motion carried.**

## **Future Meetings and Adjournment**

**Jeff Bishop asked if the Board was meeting in September, and President Spoone responded that our next meeting would be the fall Board meeting from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on October 18 and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the 19th. Jeff said he would like to see the Board meet more often, and Dan said he would like the Board to have at least one telephonic meeting between each of our live Board meetings. He will put together a schedule and send it out for Board approval.**

**There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m. Eastern time.**

**Denise Colley, Secretary**

**Date submitted: 10/14/2019**

**Date approved: 10/18/2019**