Executive Council Meeting Minutes

Village Inn 78th & Dodge Omaha NE

January 12, 2018

President Mark Bulger called the meeting to order at approximately 6:37pm. In attendance were Mark Bulger, Chris Brennfoerder, Jim Jirak, Dale Oviatt, Kathy Fox and Barb Epworth. Guests present were Sharon Brennfoerder, Becky Brennfoerder, Janet Doulas, and mother and daughter duo Gloria Olivo.

Reading & Approval of Minutes: For Jim, Dale read both the August 28 and September 21 minutes. The minutes were approved as read.

Treasurer’s Report: Dale reported the following balances as of December 31, 2017: checking $1,035.62, savings $100.28, bond fund $42,912.96 with 4,029.386 shares at $10.65 per share, dividends $1,672.22 and capital gains $649.99. Janet asked where the funds for the bond fund originated. Dale reminded her that the funds were forwarded to ACBN upon the Hastings chapter folding. The treasurer’s report was then approved.

ACB Commissioner’s Report: Mark announced the next Board of Commissioners meeting was February 3 in the Lincoln District Offices on Valley Road with the focus topic being Youth Services. He encouraged attendance.

ACBN Website: Jim reported that he joined ACB’s special interest affiliate Blind Information Technology Specialists (BITS) so as to secure the services of that affiliate to redesign our website at no cost. No one from BITS volunteered to assist, but did inform Jim of an Austin based entity that provides accessible web design to not-for-profits for only $100. Knowbility reaches out to web developers and trains them on web accessibility guidelines then pairs not-for-profits with their design team. The entire process takes approximately 5-months to complete. After confirming via telephone the legitimacy of the event, ACBN should have a new look accessible website by early June as the $100 registration fee was paid in early December.

Chapter Rep Reports: Chris reported that Lincoln has been inactive as of late. They plan on holding a meeting soon to elect officers. Barb reported that Omaha had its annual children’s picnic in September, participated in the Younkers Community Day sale and had its Christmas gathering at Jerico’s. The January meeting was postponed due to weather which means elections will take place in February.

Membership & Certification: Mark reported that because of proposed budget constraints services for blind Nebraskans could be scaled back. He indicated that for ACBN to be a viable organization we need members. He plans on authoring a letter and sending it to past members hoping to generate interest in ACBN.

NCBVI Budget: Mark expressed budget cut concerns as a 4% decrease in available spending dollars is being suggested by the governor. Mark indicated that he and Jim may attend and/or testify at the Appropriations Committee hearing.

Fundraising: Much to Dale’s delight, Mark plans on making fund raising a priority in 2018.

Give A Lift: Chris reported that Give A Lift is still operational but will be running out of funds by year’s end. He is still attempting to secure the necessary documents needed for grant writing purposes.

2018 State Convention: The state convention is taking place in Columbus April 20, 21 & 22. Given the current budget and political climate, Mark suggested a “Call To Action” theme stressing the importance of advocacy. Anthony Stephens, Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs for ACB, was suggested as the keynote speaker. Jim will reach out to him to determine interest and availability. Diane Stewart of First National Bank contacted ACBN about an Enable Savings Account presentation to highlight exciting changes in 2018. They have been given a tentative time slot of 10:30am April 21. We will begin planning further convention programming in early February.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Jirak

Secretary