Florida Statewide Monthly Business Meeting Minutes

Date: 06/21/2025

# **Quick Minutes Formatting Announcement**

The minutes will now be formatted using heading levels. This will allow for better accessibility. Screen readers users will be able to use the heading level shortcut keys when viewing the email on any device. For example, if using Jaws or NVDA, you can use the 1 key to move by heading level 1 or the 2-6 keys to move between the other heading levels 2-6. For IOS devices, you can use the headings router to move between the different headings. In addition, I will now be adding meeting summaries for a quick and easy way to digest the meeting.

# **Meeting Summary**

Our Statewide Monthly Business meeting featured officer updates, guest presentations, planning for upcoming events, and several proposed fundraisers. The meeting began with roll call and a round of personal spotlights from members. Treasurer and Secretary reports were presented and approved.

A major highlight was a presentation from Sean Welker of Visual Eyes Access, a visual interpreting service offering affordable and trained support for blind individuals, especially for tasks like job applications, accessibility consulting, and real-time navigation. His services emphasize blind-first decision-making, trained interpreters, and flexible billing with rollover minutes.

Several fundraisers were introduced and discussed for the upcoming Florida State Convention:

1. 50/50 Raffle – $1 per ticket, with a winner drawn at the banquet.
2. Guess the Candy Jar – $1 per guess; participants estimate the number of candies in a jar. Fundraiser will stop after someone guesses the correct number.
3. Lemonade Stand was originally proposed as a flavored lemonade bar, but concerns about hotel food restrictions and logistics may shift this to pre-packaged flavored water bottles.
4. City Pop Fundraiser : A snack fundraiser (popcorn, cotton candy, pretzels) running online that we are considering to launch on June 23 as a pilot fundraiser, offering a 50% profit share. This is meant as a longer-term, repeatable option.

We also discussed registration fee reimbursements for members attending the state convention. These reimbursements will now include an activity requirement based on meeting attendance and optional “filler” assignments (e.g., submitting ideas for guest speakers or fundraising).

Lastly, we explored options for the statewide social event at convention, weighing the pros and cons of an off-site Olive Garden dinner versus an in-hotel catered gathering. A final vote will be held in a future meeting.

The meeting closed with updates on the upcoming National Convention (July 8–13), including Florida Caucus details (July 11 from 8:00 PM – 9:30 PM in Salon C), and a note that the next statewide meeting will tentatively be held on July 20, 2025.

# **Resources**

[NFB National Convention Main Page](https://nfb.org/convention)

[NFB National Convention Virtual Experience Registration](https://nfb.org/civicrm/event/register?reset=1&id=619)

[Book Your Hotel for State Convention ($139.00 a night)](https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/altahhf-93o-b109485d-31c4-4c5d-b882-6256ab3b7e7f/)

[VisualEyes Access Web Page](https://visualeyesaccess.com/)

[City Pop Web Page (actual fundraising link coming soon)](https://citypopfundraising.com/#:~:text=At%20City%20Pop%2C%20you%20get,you%20always%20earn%2050%25!)

# **8:07 PM Role Call**

## Officers

* President Z’Leah Liburd
* Vice President Britney Frayer
* Treasurer Scott Wilson
* Secretary Jose Bohorquez
* Board member 1 Natalie Williams
* Board Member 2 Niklas Ham
* Board Member 3 Justin Reagan
* The entire board was present; a quorum was established.

## Other Participants

* Sherry Brunn
* Sylvia Young
* Gathari McKinley
* Shawn Welker
* Judy Hamilton
* Terry Suarez
* Scott Larson
* Paul Lewis
* Deborah Kendrick

# **8:08 PM Pledge**

Gathari recited the pledge.

# **8:09 PM Belief Statement**

The belief statement was skipped.

# **8:12 PM Agenda Review**

The agenda was reviewed.

# **8:12 PM Statewide Spotlight**

Here are some positive highlights from our members and participants during the meeting:

* Britney: Excited to return home from knee replacement surgery.
* Gathari: Ecstatic to attend her cousin’s wedding in Boca Raton, FL.
* Jose: Thrilled to have received a scholarship from Humanware.
* Sylvia: She is happy to join the Florida Statewide Chapter after moving from Tallahassee to Pensacola. Welcome, Sylvia!
* Sherry: She is looking forward to her two trips in July: National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, and visiting her daughter and grand children in Minneapolis, MN. Welcome, Sherry!
* Z’Leah: She is also excited to be taking two or three trips: visiting Jacksonville in the weekend, attending the National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, and going on a cruise later in July.
* Justin: He is preparing to eagerly go to the rehab center in Daytona Beach, FL to get a technical certification.

# **8:19 PM Treasurers Report**

The starting balance for the month of May was $1593.62.

## Expenses: $10.00

* PacPlan: $10.00

## Deposits: $34.01

* $24.01: Donation from Jose
* $10: Dues

The ending balance for the month of May was $1626.94. Justin motions to accept the treasurers report as read; Gathari seconded; all were in favor.

# **8:21 PM Secretary’s Report**

The secretary’s report was emailed to the Statewide mailing list on May 27th, 2025. Sherry motioned to accept the secretary’s report as emailed; Justin seconded; all were in favor.

# **8:23 PM Presentation – Shawn Welker from VisualEyes**

## About the Company

* Visual Eyes Access is a visual interpreting service founded in August 2024.
* Created after Sean’s program with Be My Eyes and the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI) lost funding.
* Mission-driven: blind people make decisions for blind people — interpreters provide access, not control.
* Not just a business — described as a “for-profit with a purpose.”

## Primary Service: Visual Interpreter Pro (VIP)

* Live, real-time visual interpreting using WhatsApp, allowing for secure video/audio interaction.
* Compatible with Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses for hands-free use.
* Tasks include:
  + Reading mail/documents
  + Navigating inaccessible websites or apps
  + Physical navigation
  + Job applications
  + Descriptions of visual information
* Cost: $1 per minute or less, depending on the plan.

## Subscription Options

* Pay-as-you-go or subscription plans (monthly, quarterly, or annually).
* Rollover minutes — unused minutes do not expire (unlike Aira).
* Trial offer: 30 minutes for $10 (discounted from $20 for NFB members).
* Subscribers can pause billing cycles to avoid wasting minutes:
  + Monthly: 2 pauses/year
  + Quarterly: 1 pause/year

## Discounts and Special Programs

* 50% discount on services related to:
  + Job-seeking (e.g., job applications)
  + Schoolwork (e.g., paper formatting, charts/graphs)
* Additional 50% minute credit for users who allow trainees to assist with tasks (training scenarios).
* Commitment to affordability: Sean emphasized he’ll work with users individually to create reasonable arrangements.

## Additional Services

* Web and digital accessibility consulting:
  + Especially for small businesses and nonprofits
  + Focus on inclusion over compliance
  + Gentle, education-focused approach (no litigation pressure)
* Sensitivity training, event volunteer coordination, voiceover and descriptive audio, and more available.

## Provisions Shop (Loyalty Program)

* Sells dog supplies (toys, treats, gear) for guide dogs and “good dogs”.
* Customers receive 10% of purchases back as VIP minutes.
* Friends and family can also assign their earned minutes to users.

## Engagement with the Blind Community

* Sean and team plan to exhibit at both ACB and NFB National Conventions in July 2025.
* A representative will be attending the Florida State Convention in Altamonte Springs.
* Promoting a City Pop fundraiser (snack sales) to support convention travel costs.

## Philosophy and Training

* Visual Eyes interpreters are:
  + Background checked
  + Accessibility-trained
  + Given regular coaching
* Strong emphasis on empowering blind users with accurate and meaningful information for independent decision-making.

## Contact Information

Website: [visualeyesaccess.com](https://visualeyesaccess.com/)

Email: <sean@visualeyesaccess.com>

Phone/WhatsApp: 517-630-1420

# **8:56 PM Fundraiser Ideas**

## Sneaker Ball

* Still waiting on info from the affiliate and the hotel.
* Questions include:
  + Can we bring in food or do we have to cater from the hotel?
  + Is there space available in the hotel?
  + Would we have to pay for the additional rent?

## Fifty-fifty Raffle

* Tickets will be $1.00 each.
* Raffle will run for the entire weekend of state convention.
* Tickets will be sold at the table, and runners will be walking around selling tickets.

## Candy Jar

* Candy Jar guesses will be $1.00 each.
* Guesses will stop being sold when someone guesses the correct amount of candy in the jar.
* This will be a table-only fundraiser at state convention.

## City Pop – Long-term Fundraiser

* Online fundraising platform that sells gourmet popcorn, soft-baked pretzels, and other treats.
* 50% of the proceeds will go towards statewide.
* City Pop sells gourmet popcorn, soft-baked pretzels, cotton candy, and crispy cakes.
* For the sell to be match with statewide, the customer must use our exclusive link.
* Ships all over the US.
* We are launching a pilot fundraiser from June 23rd to July 14th.

# **9:06 PM State Convention Updates/ Statewide social and reimbursements**

## State Convention Hotel booking link is now available.

* Hotel Location: Hilton Altamonte Springs 350 Northlake Blvd, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701
* Hotel Convention Code: 93o
* Hotel Prices: $139.00 per night plus taxes and fees and a $3.00 a night Seminole County Tourism fee.
* Hotel rooms can be booked from October 2nd to October 7th.
* You can call 407-830-1985 and book with the code 93o.
* Payment will be made upon arrival.
* Booking link is available in the resources section.

## Statewide Social

* Idea for the social at state convention is to have it at Olive Garden.
* Members will be responsible for transportation to and from the social.
* The social will take place at our designated statewide social time at state convention.
* RSVP will be required with the cap being 10 people, not including the board.
* Statewide is considering paying the entire the dinner for each member.

### Concerns raised during the meeting:

* Restaurant crowding
* High cost
* Accessibility logistics
* Possible time conflict with other events

### Alternatives suggested:

* Catered meal (pizza, Publix, or Chick-fil-A) in hotel room.
* Use hotel banquet services
* Vote to be conducted in the next meeting.

## State Convention Reimbursement

* Statewide is considering pay for the registration for our members.

### Possible Requirements (before convention):

* Have had attended 8 out of 12 meetings from October 2024 to September 2025. Every paid member will have a baseline of three attended meetings due to holidays, and clerical errors.
* For those who do not have 8 attended meetings by September, filler assignments will be available.

### Possible Filler Assignments:

1. Write 3-5 ways that Statewide can improve as a chapter.
2. Write 3-5 fundraising ideas that Statewide can use in the future.
3. Write 3-5 guess speakers or guess speakers topics for Statewide.

#### For any of the prompts, do the following:

* Write 3 items of the chosen prompt if you missed 3 meetings or less out of 8.
* Write 4 items of the chosen prompt if you missed 4 out of 8 meetings.
* Write 5 items of the chosen prompt if you missed 5 out of 8 meetings.

## Requirements While in Convention:

1. Attend at least 2 out of four general sessions.
2. Volunteer for two or more shifts at any open volunteering opportunity.

# **9:15 PM Last National Convention Reminder and Virtual Option**

* Convention Dates: July 8th – July 13th
* General sessions, open board meeting, and many events will be streamed live through YouTube. Keep an eye out on the WhatsApp chat.
* Virtual Experience registration is open till July 13th and is $10.00.
* Registration includes access to the convention mobile app and opportunity to win door prizes.
* Link to register for the virtual experience is available in the resources section.

# **9:32 PM Adjournment**

Jose motions to adjourn the meeting; Justin seconds; all were in favor. The meeting ended at 9:32 PM.

# **Pledge**

I pledge to participate actively in the effort of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its constitution.

# **Belief Statement**

We know that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or our future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Our collective power, determination, and diversity achieve the aspirations of all blind people.