**Pine Tree Guide Dog Users**

**Quarterly Board meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, August 2, 2023

President Pauline Lamontagne called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Roll call -

Present:

Pauline Lamontagne, President.

Leona McKenna, First Vice President.

Gil Whitmore, Second Vice President.

Linda Porelle, Secretary.

Patty Sarchi, Director.

Ginger Kutsch, Director.

Sadie Donnell, Director.

Christina Brino, Director.

Excused:

Merrill Barter, Treasurer.

Additional members and guests present:

Carolyn Bebee, Roger Fuller

Additions to and adoption of proposed agenda.

Pauline asked that the request from Disability Rights Maine regarding training for medical staff be added to new business as well as discussion of changes to the PTGDU constitution and bylaws.

Linda moved to adopt the agenda and Sadie Seconded the motion. The vote was carried.

The revised Draft Membership Meeting Minutes for May 2023 were accepted.

Treasurer's Report

Since Merrill was absent, Pauline tabled the vote for the report until our next meeting.

Christina expressed problems with reading the excel spreadsheet with JAWS. She will reach out to Merrill to discuss possible formatting changes.

Carolyn asked about our current acknowledgement practice is when receiving cash donations. Linda will check with Merrill to see what we currently have in place.

Committee Reports and discussions.

White Cane Awareness Walk - Update on proposed walk on October 14, 2023 -

Lee shared that ACB Maine is looking into hiring a bus to transport members who live in the central Maine area who wish to attend the white cane walk. She also noted that the PTGDU scholarship committee is working on revising the Pat Ellis Memorial Scholarship Fund application which, if adopted, could be a source of funding to help pay for the bus.

Sadie stated that one of PTGDU's roles as an Iris Network White Cane Walk committee member is to recruit walkers and assist with transportation if possible. Sadie has also volunteered to make balloon animals before and after the walk at the PTGDU table.

Lee said that she and Cheryl had been hoping to hand out small bags of candy at the tables.

Christina suggested making "goodie bags" for dog owners.

Ginger shared information about possible post card handouts for the event. Sadie offered to find volunteers to carry the PTGDU banner during the walk.

Website -

Pauline shared that the new member and renewal membership forms are now posted on our website.

Legislative and advocacy -

Pauline shared that LD 988 "Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Conduct an Accessibility Study of All Maine State Parks and Historic Sites and to develop a Plan to Remove Access Barriers" was carried over to the next legislative session due to lack of funding. The next legislative session begins in January.

Membership -

Carolyn shared that we now have 32 members. The committee is looking into outreach possibilities for next year with a focus on trying to connect with the three major agencies serving the blind and low vision community: DBVI, The Iris Network, and Catholic Charities. PTGDU could collaborate with ACB Maine to be present at an agency annual conference.

Linda shared that she had heard about an AER New England meeting this fall and offered to find out more information about it and send out a follow-up email with more details.

Public relations, publications, newsletter -

Gil asked how many followers we have on our Facebook page and Ginger shared that we have 226 followers. She said that many of the advocacy posts receive more reactions and shares than most other posts.

Fundraising -

Christina shared that the committee is looking into holding a holiday fundraiser. Pauline reported that there is still no decision about our grant request from ACB Maine.

Old Business -

Update on ACB 2023 convention

Linda gave a quick overview of her experience at this year's ACB convention. Her report highlighted the key aspects of the event.

Plan to Post meeting minutes after approval.

Linda reported that the plan is to post all meeting minuts, with the exception of a detailed treasurer's report, on our web site once the minutes have been approved. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of the treasurer's report will be directed to send an email request to info@PineTreeGuideDogUsers.org. After some discussion, it was decided that the minutes will be posted on the membership page and start with the February 2023 minutes. Linda will prepare the documents for posting and Ginger will write a short paragraph for the membership page. She'll also talk with Steve Lambert about the easiest way for accessing the minutes.

New business -

Appointment of Nominations Committee

Pauline appointed Cheryl Peabody to chair the nominating committee and Steve Lambert agreed to assist. Pauline does not plan to run again for president. Ginger will draft a notice about the elections for the website and email an announcement to members.

GDUI email membership list participation.

Linda shared that she had not been receiving announcements from GDUI and asked if anyone was experiencing the same problem. Everyone else seemed to be receiving the messages so Pauline suggested that Linda reach out to GDUI to find out what was happening.

Planning and setting date for next membership meeting.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, November 1, 2023 at 6:30 PM on Zoom. Ginger and Pauline will work on getting a guest speaker, preferably from a guide dog school, to speak at the beginning of the meeting -- 30 minutes for the presentation plus 15 minutes for Q&A. Elections will follow the presentation.

Disability Rights Maine

Sadie shared that she will be part of a panel designed to educate medical students about her experiences and challenges in health care settings. Linda will reach out to see if more panelist are needed.

Constitution and Bylaws -

Ginger reviewed two proposed changes to our constitution and bylaws.

The first change would be to eliminate the Second Vice President position and add the position of Immediate Past President.

The second change would simply clarify that all meetings may be held either in person or via teleconference. The board agreed to the proposed changes.

Ginger will make a draft for the board's review before sending to the membership at least 30 days before our fall membership meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:29 PM