

## BLIND LGBT PRIDE INTERNATIONAL

### ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Monday, JULY 8, 2013

National Convention, Columbus Ohio

#### **Call to order**

Guillermo Robles called the meeting to order at 5:45 PM EST.

#### **Roll Call**

Board Members Present: Guillermo Robles, Mark Hanohano, Don Brown, Kevin Ratliff, George Ashiotis, Mikey Wiseman

About 13 members present and approximately 4 on phone conference.

Absent: Gabriel Lopez and Connie Torrisi

#### **Minutes for June 2013**

The minutes were approved as submitted. MSC (Wiseman, Ashiotis)

#### **Public Comment**

Rob Hill suggested that BPI try to make a donation of \$100 to the Braille Forum. Guillermo said that he doesn't have a problem with that. There was a unanimous vote to take up a collection for the Braille Forum.

#### **President Comments**

Guillermo said that he has been looking forward to this for quite some time, even before he became president. When he came on board, he really had some big ideas for the organization. His last interaction with the organization was when it was called BFLAG. He wanted to focus

on all aspects of the name, specifically the international part. He even reached out to the Blind Gay List. He also talked about the revamping of the membership list. We reviewed it with a fine tooth comb. We also worked on fundraising. We have not put fundraising on hold, but we are trying to identify what we want to fundraise for.

He talked about our social media pages. He invited members and supporters to please follow us on Facebook and Twitter. He also mentioned “the great state of Texas”, which will be addressed later in the meeting. BPI is trying to reach the youth. He stressed the importance of having someone to talk to. He is also looking into the purpose of our fundraising. Fundraising is definitely going to be an important part of what we do in the upcoming year.

## **Treasurer’s Report**

### **Accounts**

**Paypal** \$279.88

**Checking:** \$1872.08

**Savings:** \$499.78

**Endowment:** \$300.10

**Total:** 2951.74

Donations for convention totaled \$810. The August report will reflect all income and payments associated with convention. Guillermo read a statement from Gabriel. In his statement, he acknowledged George Abbott for his collaboration and assistance. He also gave an explanation of each of BPI’s accounts. He discussed the importance of fundraising, and he invited everyone to participate in the process. In addition, he expressed his dedication to convention, both this year’s and future conventions. He believes that we will at least break even this year.

Finally, he talked about his new guide dog, and he thanked BPI members who have been supportive. Treasurer’s report was accepted as read. MSC, (Brown, Wiseman)

## **Membership Report**

George reported that a goal was set to clean the membership list of any deadweight, to get a membership that is more responsive and vibrant. We are now down to 84 members. He stated that he is not seeking another term. Guillermo recognized George’s hard work by awarding him a Lifetime Membership. Sharon Lovering was present and spoke during the recognition

acknowledging and thanking George for all of his hard work on the membership list and working with the new electronic, online reporting system.

Connie Torrisi was also recognized for her service as editor with an award of a Lifetime Membership.

## **Communication report**

Will Burley reported that the Facebook and Twitter pages were changed. We have more than 300 Twitter followers. We have 65 fans on Facebook. We have 55 members in our Facebook group.

## **I.T. Report**

Will reported that Don Wilson resigned as web master about 2 months ago. Will thanked him for all of his assistance. We now have new discussion groups and lists. We also added the HeyTell group, which is very active, especially this week. The I.T committee has a lot of exciting things planned for the upcoming year.

## **Constitution and Bylaws**

Don Brown started by thanking the members of the committee. He reviewed some of the proposed changes to the constitution. He discussed the standing committees and who would chair those committees, and their purpose. The committee is also recommending a change in dues. Membership Dues would go from \$12 to \$15; Student dues will go from \$6 to \$10. He also discussed the recommended membership levels and the addition of a parliamentarian as a board member. The committee also took a look at affiliates and specifically the lifetime Memberships. They recommend a \$200 Lifetime membership, in an effort to gain more Lifetime members. Rob Hill asked a question about the requesting permission to use the name BPI. Don stated the affiliates would be able to use the BPI name and logo to promote their affiliate. Scott expressed some concern about having the Parliamentarian being an elected official. He said that the Parliamentarian should be an impartial member without a dog in the fight. Scott also talked about a recent article on nonprofits and the DC law. Mikey asked a question about the endowment fund and the installment plan. Don explained the Lifetime membership proposed language. Terry asked for clarification of the membership and supporting members. Mikey made a motion to address the parliamentarian item separately. MSC, (Wiseman, Hill) Richard Marion made a motion to table the bylaw for the parliamentarian to next year's meeting.

The motion was approved. Rob Hill made a motion to add and elect a 9<sup>th</sup> board member. Rob amended his motion to have the position elected next year. Mikey made a friendly amendment to create the position of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President instead of a member at large position. Rob accepted. Harlow gave an explanation of how the position would be created, and when the president would appoint the position. There was further discussion among board members and members present about the 9<sup>th</sup> board seat. Rob then reversed his acceptance of the friendly amendment. The constitutional report and proposed changes to the constitution and bylaws, with the exception of the parliamentary office/9<sup>th</sup> board seat, were approved. MSC, (Brown, Wiseman)

## **Convention and Programming**

Mark Hanohano reported that the convention committee started working on the convention program in October 2012. BPI's programming was pretty much set as early as January of this year. BPI worked closely with Janet and partnered with 4 other affiliates on convention programming. The committee created a sponsorship letter, and the committee also made getting volunteers for BPI events a priority.

Marks recommendations for future convention planning committees are: 1. Fundraising committee becomes more active in the convention planning process; 2. BPI develops an Assistance program to help members and board members attend convention. 3. The convention committee visits the city of the convention in advance to lay the groundwork and start planning for the convention. Mark thanked Will for helping with the appeal letter and Mikey for helping with some of the activities. Scott thanked Mark and his committee for a job well done.

## **Affiliation of Blind LGBT Pride of Texas**

Will reported that BPI TX has 15 members now. 6 of the members participated in the LGBT lobby Day. A motion was made to approve the affiliate. MSC, (Brown, Wiseman)

Kevin Ratliff gave a report on what happened with the BPITX application to affiliate with ACBT. After BPITX submitted all of their paperwork, the constitution and bylaws along with the dues for 12 members, the 60 day review process began. The ACBT Constitution and Bylaws committee requested several minor changes to the constitution and bylaws, some were as simple as typos; others were concerning age requirements, membership requirements and chapters. The president of ACBT and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee delayed and used stall tactics, because they did not want BPITX to become an affiliate. Kevin and Will learned of some of the committee members personal feelings about BPITX and LGBT groups through conversations with another executive board member. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the board voted and denied BPITX affiliate status without good reason or cause. Guillermo read the resolution which addresses the matter. Mikey asked for clarification on the reasons for denial. Mikey also asked how the resolution

process usually works. Kevin explained that no clear reasons were given. Some board members said that BPITX was just creating a social group. Don Brown moved to adopt the resolution.

MSC, (Brown, Marion)

Scott stated that it is important for BPI members to be present to support the resolution on the floor.

## **Elections**

Don Brown announced the members of the Elections Committee, Don Brown and Harlow Pease.

## **Vice President**

**Candidates:** William Burley and Mark Hanohano

There were 3 calls for any other nominations. There were no nominations from the floor.

William Burley was elected as president by a majority vote.

## **Secretary**

Kevin Ratliff was elected Secretary by acclamation.

## **Board Member-at-Large Seat 1**

Kaitlin Hernandez was elected to Board Member-at-Large Seat 1 by acclamation

## **Board Member-at-Large Seat 2**

**Candidate:** Richard Marion

Mikey Wiseman nominated Mark Hanohano.

Richard Marion was elected to the Board Member-at-Large Seat 3 by a majority vote.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM EST.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Ratliff

Secretary

