Minutes

GDUI Board of Directors Meeting (Special)

September 11, 2024

1. The GDUI Board of Directors convened on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 6:30pm eastern via Zoom.

2. Attendance:

Sarah Calhoun, President,, Present

Maria Hansen, 1st Vice President , Present

Cheryl McNeill Fisher, 2nd Vice President, Present,

Maria Kristic, Treasurer, Present

Lynn Merrill, Secretary, Present

Penny Reeder, Immediate Past President, Present

Vacant, Director 1, Excused

Lolly Lijewski, Director 2, Present,

Olivia Norman, Director 3, Present,

Vicky Kennedy, Director 4, Present,

Kay Malmquist, Director 5, Present,

Liz Bottner, Director 6 , Excused

Joyce Feinberg , Affiliates Liaison, Present

Ryan Hooey, Guide Dog Schools Liaison, Present,

Andrea Giudice, Editor, Excused

Melanie Brunson, Advocacy and Legislative Affairs Committee Chair, Present,

Three GDUI members announced their presence.

3. Meeting protocol: if one wishes the floor, please do not interrupt; members who wish to comment will be asked to state their name when the person speaking has finished. Those who have stated their names will be called upon in the order in which they were stated. GDUI members in attendance may make comments prior to the Board voting on an issue.

4. Agenda: President Calhoun stated that the purpose of, and agenda for, the special meeting was to discuss one topic with respect to considering a recommendation from the Advocacy and Legislative affairs Committee that the GDUI Board favorably consider sending one or more representatives to a rally NAGDU is holding in California concerning rideshare services denying guide dog handlers transportation. Motion to approve agenda (Merrill/Kennedy) passed unanimously by acclamation.

5. Background: M. Brunson reported that on October 15, 2024, NAGDU is organizing rallies in San Francisco, CA, at the headquarters of Uber and LYFT to voice dismay and opposition to the continued discrimination against guide dog handlers accompanied with their guides as well as some people with white canes. Ride share denials continue and are increasing rather than decreasing despite efforts made by ACB and NFB. The Advocacy and Legislative Affairs Committee enthusiastically recommends that GDUI send at least one representative to the rally to speak, if the opportunity arises, on behalf of GDUI.

Since this event is aligned with the purposes set forth in the GDUI Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the Board expressed equal sentiment for GDUI to be represented and that the representatives be from leadership positions on the Board. Further discussion led to three volunteers; Sarah Calhoun, as President, Olivia Norman, who has persistently experienced frequent ride share denials, and Ryan Hooey, who is featured in a video of a person with a guide dog using ride share and also has attended a rally in Canada. Joyce Feinberg also volunteered to attend; however, the decision of whether she of Olivia will be the third person will be made between them.

6. Motion: That GDUI authorize funding of expenses for up to three GDUI leaders to attend the rally in San Francisco, CA on October 15, 2024, sponsored by NFB and NAGDU in an amount not to exceed $2,500.00 per person (Kristic/Reeder). Motion passed unanimously by roll-call vote. While a limit was established for expenses for each attendee, guidelines were suggested such as traveling in coach class, keeping meals expenses within reasonable rates, staying at the hotel that has been blocked with a rate of $139 plus tax per night, and utilizing the shuttles for transportation to and from the event.

7. Further actions:

1. S. Calhoun will contact the President of NAGDU to inform them of the attendees from GDUI and to coordinate and needed plans for speaking, etc.
2. Motion: A letter from President Calhoun be sent to the President of ACB asking them to show solidarity to the cause by sending a representative from ACB to the rally on October 15 (Reeder/Norman). Motion passed unanimously by acclamation. The letter will be drafted by P. Reeder, C. McNiel-Fisher, and M. Brunson for signature by the President.
3. After President Calhoun communicates with the President of NAGDU, a press release will be drafted for publication of the GDUI website and social media pages.

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8. Adjournment: In the absence of further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm eastern.

Respectfully,

Lynn Merrill

Secretary

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