

**West St. Paul  
Beyond the Yellow Ribbon  
Minutes of September 3, 2019**

1) Call Meeting to Order and Introductions

Chair Le called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

Members Present: Sherrie Le, Chair  
SSG Ralph Blystone  
Jan Bremner, Volunteer Coordinator  
Shirley Buecksler, Secretary/Treasurer  
Neil Garlock  
Ed Iago, Business Liaison Officer  
Gene Kahnke  
Mary Kahnke  
MaryJo McBride  
Brian Mielke  
Jesse Mettner  
Fleming Peyton  
Melissa Pond-Benesh, Vice Chair  
Mary Schultz

Also Present: Mike Windsperger, Yellow Ribbon Regional Outreach Coordinator  
for Central Minnesota

2) Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of July 2, 2019

Motion was made by Mielke and seconded by McBride to approve the minutes of July 2, 2019.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

B. Minutes of August 6, 2019

Motion was made by Mielke and seconded by McBride to approve the minutes of August 6, 2019.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

3) Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer provided the report for the Committee, also attached to the minutes as part of the record.

## Current Balances:

- Checking: \$ 2512.72, less checks not yet posted

### Checking Account Activity:

- \$189.37 Check to Ed Iago for National Guard Event expenses
- \$100.00 Donation from LeVander, Gillen & Miller
- \$400.00 Donation from Dunkin Donuts

- Savings: \$14,885.00

### Savings Account Activity:

- \$100.00 Donation from Navy Island Plywood
- \$1,000.00 Donation from Mobile Prosystems

- Non-monetary donations from The Framing Place & Gallery and anonymous donors

## 4) Old Business

### A. Discuss Recent Appreciation Event

Chair Le thanked Mettner for getting both Police and Fire Staff to attend the event.

Blystone said that Guard members were happy and had a good time. The new FRG will be a Lieutenant's wife and Blystone will see if she can attend a meeting. Everyone was thankful for the event and appreciative to the Yellow Ribbon group.

Chair Le asked if there are any changes or suggestions for next year. Blystone said there was more than enough food.

Chair Le thanked Bremner for organizing all of the volunteers who did a great job. She thanked everyone who helped with this event and said the prizes went well. A Guard members' mom won the television set, she said. Chair Le thanked Iago for collecting all of the prizes for the event.

### B. Merger Discussions – Next Step

#### i. 2019-2020 Work Plan

- Windsperger said he can help with this.
- Chair Le suggested adding this item to the next agenda and have it be the only item on that agenda

#### ii. Steering Committee and Board for 2020

- West St. Paul:
  - Sherrie Le, Past Chair
  - Shirley Buecksler, Treasurer
  - Ed Iago, Business Liaison Officer

- Jan Bremner, Volunteer Coordinator
- Gene and Mary Kahnke, Legion/Auxiliary
- Mark Juelfs, Public Safety/EMS
- Jesse Mettner, Public Safety/Mental Health
- Mary Jo McBride, Community Member
- Mendota Heights
  - Neil Garlock, Chair and Mayor
  - Mark McNeill, City Administrator
  - Fleming Peyton, Public Safety
  - Community Member
- Mendota
  - Brian Mielke, Mayor
  - VFW Member
  - Community Member
- Lilydale
  - Mary Schultz, Yellow Ribbon Secretary
  - Community Member (2)
- Dakota County
  - Lisa Thomas, Veterans Services Director
  - Melissa Pond-Benesh, Wentworth Library
- Military Resources
  - Brad Legrid, MACV
  - FAC
  - FRG
  - Mike Windsperger, YRROC
  - SSG Ralph Blystone, Readiness NCO
- Multiple Cities
  - Chaplain
  - ISD 197
  - Community Education

Chair Le said that members should attend most of the meetings.

Chair Le said Pond-Benesh would prefer to handle communications, social media and newsletters for the Yellow Ribbon. She will be our Marketing & Communications person.

Windsperger said he will verify who the FAC representative is.

McBride said she watched the West St. Paul City Council meeting and Sue Plucker was mentioned as a Chaplain. Iago said there is a priest at St. Joe's that is ex-military. Blystone said this priest was deployed with the Guard, so he will be unavailable. Mettner said he will provide a list of chaplains to the Chair.

Chair Le said we have a Steering Committee and that most positions are filled but we need a Vice Chair or Co-Chair. Two possibilities for Vice Chair are

Mielke, who said he could do this, or someone from Lilydale. Schultz will check with them.

Chair Le said one of the items in the action plan is the events we have. In 2020, she said we will have an event for pre-deployment in May (deploying in June). Blystone will get dates to the Chair. Chair Le said she would like to coordinate with the FRG before deployment and find out whether they have meetings while Guard members are deployed and activities that we could do with the kids during those meetings. Blystone added that there will be someone staying behind at the Armory to coordinate this with.

Mary Kahnke suggested a fundraiser.

Chair Le said she knows someone in this area who is an artist at flipping pancakes. If anyone has a contact, let her know. She said she would like to do something for the families and get the community involved, as well.

Chair Le mentioned the volunteer holiday party. Windsperger said we will need a volunteer list and the number of hours they put in.

Windsperger gave a quick update on Worthington and said they submitted their action plan but it got sent back for edits. He said he will use those notes to be sure ours is complete and done correctly. Chair Le said we have gone through the activity and assistance spreadsheet and that she has from 2017 through current.

Thomas said that she and Windsperger have done graphics for how many were served and they both presented this information to their Boards.

Iago asked Windsperger for a list of what we need to submit so that we can get this done sooner.

Chair Le asked if we can refer to ourselves now as the Northern Dakota County Yellow Ribbon network.

Garlock said that the City of Mendota Heights passed a resolution and that he would send a copy to Buecksler for Council adoption.

Windsperger said that the Governor, Lt. Governor and the Adjutant General may attend the ceremony of the new Northern Dakota County Beyond the Yellow Ribbon network.

Chair Le said we can create a first draft at the next meeting. The next agenda should be listed as Northern Dakota County Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, she said.

## 5) Liaison and Officer Reports

### A. County and Military Resources Updates

Thomas had no update. She said the County's next Yellow Ribbon meeting is at the end of October. She clarified that this network's name is Northern Dakota County Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Network.

Mielke said that once they advertise, it will generate a little more buzz.

Garlock said Mendota Heights has a very good media person who will send it out when we are ready.

Blystone said he will talk with the Commander regarding a family event in October. Chair Le asked if the Yellow Ribbon can help. Blystone said he will discuss with the Commander. Chair Le asked if they will have a holiday party. Blystone said no, it will be in February for the whole battalion.

### B. Business/Fundraising Update

Iago said we cannot go into other communities or start a Facebook page for advertising when we are still West St. Paul Yellow Ribbon. He said we are behind the curve on publicity, as well, and would like to see it advertised on television, the billboard, etc.

McBride thanked the Manager at Oxendale's for their donation. Iago said he is waiting for the Manager to let him know when the owner is available to present their plaque. Iago said that Oxendale's has been very good to the Yellow Ribbon.

Iago said we officially received our first "no" for donation. Arctic Ice, formerly known as North Star Ice, said no.

After dealing with the National Auto Dealers Association for three weeks, Iago said they suggested he talk to the dealers directly.

Iago said publicity would be very helpful. Chair Le suggested forming a subcommittee to do this. Pond-Benesh said she has some photos for the newsletter.

Chair Le suggested a separate subcommittee of Dan Nowicki, Melissa Pond-Benesh and the Mendota Heights social media staff person. Garlock suggested just going forward with it. Windsperger said it's going to happen either way, it just may come back for editing.

Iago said that businesses are looking for employees and the sooner we can get a website going, they like the idea that it can be posted at the Armory, VFW, etc. He said businesses like that we have the ability to advertise for them. Iago also said that he has a plaque of appreciation for the Mendota VFW.

Mary Kahnke said we should send a thank you to the South St. Paul VFW for the flag they donated to Albert Park. She will forward the Commander's name to Buecksler to send the letter.

C. Volunteer Program

Iago suggested that Bremner talk with the Manager at Verizon, who oversees 30-40 volunteers. Bremner said she will reach out to him this week.

Bremner thanked everyone for their help at the appreciation event. She said she sent thank you notes to those outside of the committee.

6) New Business

A. Veteran and Guard Requests

Iago said he was contacted by a Guard member who needed assistance. He contacted the County and within 48 hours the County contacted Iago. He said the County did a great job taking care of him. Thomas said she will follow up.

Chair Le said she talked to Mettner about two properties. Mettner said the next problem property meeting will be coming up soon. Chair Le asked Thomas if she had any information on these properties. Thomas said she would find out and advise the Chair.

Chair Le commented on the presentation at the July 22, 2019 West St. Paul Council meeting by West St. Paul Officer Jesse Metter, South St. Paul Officer Derek Kruse and Dakota County Social Services Licensed Clinical Social Worker Kalyn Bassett.

Metter said a veteran has refused services by the City. Thomas said this veteran has reluctantly accepted services through the Veterans Administration.

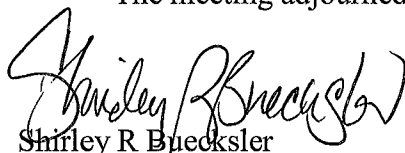
Peyton said he will also send a list of chaplains to Chair Le.

7) Next Meeting October 1, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

The committee agreed to starting future meetings at 2:00 p.m. instead of 2:30 p.m.

8) Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

  
Shirley R Buecksler  
Secretary/Treasurer