

**West St. Paul  
Beyond the Yellow Ribbon  
Minutes of November 5, 2019**

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Sherrie Le called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Members Present:            Sherrie Le, Chair  
                                      Jan Bremner, Volunteer Coordinator  
                                      Shirley Buecksler, Secretary/Treasurer  
                                      Julie Burkhardt  
                                      Bob Burkhardt, VFW Liaison  
                                      Sgt. Peyton Fleming, Mendota Heights Police Department  
                                      CPT Adam Gades, State Family Programs Director  
                                      Neil Garlock, Mendota Heights Mayor  
                                      Ed Iago, Business Liaison Officer  
                                      Mark Juelfs, South Metro Fire Chief  
                                      Kathy Krotter, Mendota City Clerk  
                                      Jesse Mettner, West St. Paul Police Department  
                                      Melissa Pond-Benesh, Vice Chair  
                                      Lisa Thomas, Dakota County

Also Present:                Lee Okerstrom, DEED – Veteran’s Representative

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of October 1, 2019

Motion was made by Garlock and seconded by Iago to approve the minutes of October 1, 2019.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

4. Treasurer’s Report

A. Current Account Balance and Activity:

Checking:     \$ 2,254.61 (pending post of payment in the amount of \$189.37)

Recent Activity:

There was no recent activity on the checking account.

Savings: \$16,760.01

Recent Activity:

\$935.01 transferred from a commitment from South Robert Street Business Association to a payment in the same amount

\$350.00 donation from Solid Construction

\$ 30.00 donation from Sandy's Hair Salon

5. Old Business

A. Finalize 2019-2020 Workplan

Gades has the final action plan. He will talk with Garlock after the meeting to finish it up. Gades said the plan was well thought out. Based off the draft and comments he gave, this network looks good to move forward and use the Northern Dakota County Beyond the Yellow Ribbon name. Review boards won't meet in November and may not meet in December, due to holidays in each month. Final approval of the plan will probably be in January, after which he will forward the final document.

B. Confirm Steering Committee and Board

Gades suggested identifying key players in this area, with a referral of who to go to in the Yellow Ribbon organization and an expert from one of those fields to partner with, as well.

Thomas said there is a significant connection between the Yellow Ribbon and the County, as well as with the Police and Fire Departments.

Gades said not to start any new initiatives now. If there is a need coming from the County or providers, do we think that's being met? Chair Le said a goal for 2020 could be to include medical, Fire and Police providers from all four cities. She also said that she has created a spreadsheet of veterans and service members that we have assisted. Gades suggested that this document be kept internally due to private data; however, statistics about how many we have assisted would be helpful, he said. Thomas said these statistics already come from the Yellow Ribbon to the County.

Steering Committee and Board Positions for 2020:

Chair:	Neil Garlock
Vice Chair:	Brian Mielke
Treasurer:	Shirley Buecksler
Secretary:	Mary Schultz
Social Media/Communications:	Melissa Pond-Benesh
Volunteer Coordinator:	Jan Bremner

Chair Le suggested that the agenda for the January meeting be sent out by incoming Chair Garlock in December.

### C. Promotion Through Newspaper Articles and NDC4

Bremner said articles have been placed in The Voice for three months. Chair Le suggested she pass this information along to Pond-Benesh to include in social media.

Iago said he reached out to Molly Guthrie for an article and asked her to contact him.

Tommy from NDC4 reached out to Iago and said he sees this as a multi-part show. He is receptive to what this committee wants to do. Representatives from each City, Mayors, Military and County should be there. Iago said he will call Tommy back tomorrow to line it up.

Chair Le suggested forming a subcommittee to work with him and discuss. The subcommittee will include Chair Le, Garlock, Iago, Mielke, Thomas and Gades.

The meeting of the subcommittee was scheduled for Thursday, November 7, 2019, at 3:30 p.m. in the West St. Paul Lobby Conference Room. Iago will also invite NDC4 to attend.

### D. Update All Cities' Websites

Chair Le said each City should coordinate website information with Nowicki.

Garlock said Mendota Heights has already put an article in their community newsletter that will be going out to residents soon.

Chair Le said a list of contacts for services should be on each City's website and that they can look at West St. Paul's website for examples.

### E. New NDC BTYR Brochures

The Board approved the new logo submitted by Nowicki. Pond-Benesh will work with Chair Le and Nowicki to update the brochures.

## 6. Liaison and Officer Reports

### A. County and Military Resources Updates

Thomas said the annual State of Minnesota Veteran's Day Event is on November 11<sup>th</sup>, with breakfast starting at 8:30 a.m. and the program at 10:00 a.m.

Gades said a lot of events have been shared for Veteran's Day. Feel free to share any other events with them and they will put it on their Facebook page. He said they will support any of our initiatives for Veteran's Day.

Chair Le asked if we could advertise specials offered by businesses for veterans on Veteran's Day. Gades said the Pioneer Press has a list we could copy and use. Thomas suggested searching on Google, also.

Thomas said the County was approached a year about by the Association of Purple Hearts for the County to become a Purple Heart County. The County will be doing a proclamation on Tuesday to become a Purple Heart County. They will put signs on the Veteran's Trail that is being built in Dakota County. She said that Cities can also become Purple Heart Cities.

Gades suggested putting a placeholder on our calendars for next September to get on their Veteran's Day list.

## B. Business/Fundraising Update

Iago showed photos of a veteran's yard that needed maintenance. The cheapest quote to haul brush was \$350.00. To have a volunteer who can help veterans is essential, he said. The volunteer who helped cleaned up the yard and hauled the brush away for only \$175.00.

Iago said a Vietnam veteran with cancer contacted the County because she was notified by the City's code enforcement for long grass. This same volunteer went and cleaned up her grass. Iago said volunteers take off the pressure by the City and that at the bottom of all code enforcement letters is a statement for veterans to contact the Yellow Ribbon for assistance.

Iago said as he continues to fundraise, it becomes apparent that:

- i. People have not heard of the Yellow Ribbon network
- ii. Larger companies are looking for employees

Iago sends the contact to Okerstrom of a company that needs staff and he runs with it. Iago said Okerstrom is very important to us.

Okerstrom said there are two different veteran employment representatives. One works with veterans and helps them get ready for employment. The other (himself) works with businesses as a resource for them. He tries to assist them to fill that position or figure out what the issue is for keeping employees. Okerstrom said he tries to recommend that they hire a veteran or a family member of a veteran.

Okerstrom said he has an email list of several hundred veterans looking for jobs. He sends them job leads that they are qualified for and are in their skill set. He also helps them get into the [www.mnworks.net](http://www.mnworks.net) website where they can put in their resume to let all of the businesses know they are looking for employment. At the same time, businesses can put their information into it, as well as the type of employee they need, and the system connects the two. Okerstrom said he works to match the best qualified employee to the job. He said he screens their resume before he forwards it.

Iago said it would be great to get this on social media.

Also, Iago added that he will be getting three new baseballs signed by Joe Mauer.

C. Twin Cities Task Force Update

Chair Le said that she, Pond Benesh, and Buecksler went to a conference where they discussed separate task forces. Very few know of the resources available. She said we want to be sure the task force purpose and everything is streamlined for the most suitable for them. Chair Le said she is on a task force dealing with the system. She said this is a way to decide where we want to be.

7. New Business

A. New or Outstanding Requests from Current and Former Service Members

Chair Le asked if the County has received any calls because she wants to be sure she is not missing anyone, now that she is no longer employed at the City. Thomas said she will check.

B. South St. Paul Holiday Event – Update

Chair Le said South St. Paul doesn't need any volunteers this year. She said they had too many volunteers at their last event.

C. Discuss Contribution Toward National Guard Holiday Party

Chair Le will contact Blystone if he needs anything for the event he is planning for November 25. Juelfs said it sounds like they don't have anything definitive for their holiday party.

D. DARTS Collaboration (Referral of Names and Social Isolation Project)

Iago said he got a call from a West St. Paul resident who had problems cutting his grass. He was referred to DARTS. Iago spoke with the DARTS representative and also met with their President. They cover the whole county and have staff members who assess the party. Iago asked if they receive calls from veterans. He suggested to them if they receive a call from a veteran, to forward it on to the Yellow Ribbon. At the same time, if the Yellow Ribbon cannot help someone, DARTS may be able to. A DARTS representative will be going to the County Board meeting in January.

Iago said DARTS is willing to discuss a discounted fee for the Yellow Ribbon for veterans. If Cities want any information on DARTS, Iago can forward their contact information. He said DARTS is a really good resource.

Chair Le said DART has had many more requests than staff to help. Bremner said she believes DARTS only helps those who are 55-60 or older.

Iago said DARTS sees the Yellow Ribbon as a plus, so they may be able to bend those rules. He suggested that the DARTS representative attend a Yellow Ribbon meeting after they attend the County's meeting.

Chair Le said we could use more volunteers for next year's deployment. She asked if we know how many soldiers will deploy from the four cities. Thomas said the unit could share that number but she didn't think it was very high.

#### E. Facebook Fundraising

Prior to the meeting, Nowicki provided recommendations for a different route than fundraising through Facebook, due to people's uncertainty about Facebook keeping their information private. Other platforms he recommended and that he said would be more fitting include:

- Paypal/Venmo
- Square (for in-person donations via credit or debit card or mobile pay)
- Indiegogo
- Fundly
- GoFundMe (for specific campaigns)
- Patreon (for ongoing monthly donations)

Chair Le and Thomas mentioned that some of these platforms charge a fee for using them.

Chair Le said that once we get approved, Neighbors, Inc. will have to approve it, after which we can decide which bank we want to use. Thomas questioned if Neighbors, Inc. accepts online donations at this time.

#### F. December Meeting Volunteer Appreciation

Chair Le, Pond-Benesh, Buecksler and several others said they will bring a dessert or something to share.

#### Other Discussion:

Gades said the Joining Community Forces Event is scheduled for May 1 and 2, 2020.

Gades mentioned the Holiday for Heroes Event on December 8, 2020. They are looking for 25 volunteers. Gades will forward the sign-up roster to Chair Le.

Gades said the ESGR Freedom Award is in session and that now is the time to nominate businesses that are doing great things. Send any nominations to Okerstrom or Gades.

Thomas said Wreaths Across America will be placing wreaths at Fort Snelling on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Anyone can sponsor a wreath or volunteer to lay wreaths. According to their website, as of November 5<sup>th</sup>:

Results:

*171 Wreaths Sponsored*

*0% to Goal*

*49,829 To Go!*

*“On Saturday, December 14, 2019 at 11:00 a.m., Ft. Snelling Donations (MN0039) will be helping Fort Snelling National Cemetery to Remember and Honor our veterans by laying remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country’s fallen heroes.*

*Please help us honor and remember as many fallen heroes as possible by sponsoring remembrance wreaths, volunteering on Wreaths Day, or inviting your family and friends to attend with you.”*

Visit their website at [Wreaths Across America, Fort Snelling](#) to sponsor a wreath or to volunteer.

8. Schedule Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Yellow Ribbon is scheduled for Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. in the West St. Paul Lobby Conference Room. No business will be conducted at this meeting but, rather, it is a time to thank and appreciate our volunteers.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Shirley R Buecksler  
Secretary/Treasurer

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon  
Treasurer's Report  
2019 Checking Account Transactions

Checking Account						
					Previous Balance (as of 1/01/2019):	\$5,773.70
Post Date	Deposit Amount	Check/ Charge Amount	Paid To	Link to Receipt	Description	Appreciation Letter Sent
1/2/2019	2,000.00			<a href="#">01-02-19 Deposit</a>	Donation from VFW 6690	Sent by Mary Kahnke
2/13/2019		(\$30.23)	Sherrie Le		Reimbursement for Volunteer Event	
2/22/2019		(\$64.99)	Southview Garden Center	<a href="#">12-10-18 Southview Garden Center Invoice</a>	WSP Vet-Christmas Tree	3/27/2019
4/8/2019		(\$32.48)	Target	<a href="#">04-08-19 Target Receipt</a>	SSP Vet-Baby Products	
4/10/2019		(\$50.00)	Pace's Auto	<a href="#">04-08-19 Pace's Receipt</a>	SSP Vets-Gas Card	4/10/2019
4/16/2019		(\$5,596.00)	Transfer to Savings		Transfer to Savings	
4/22/2019		(\$52.27)	MN DMV, South St. Paul	<a href="#">04-22-19 MN DMV Receipt</a>	SSP Vet-Vehicle Tabs	
5/9/2019	64.99			<a href="#">05-09-19 Deposit</a>	Reimbursement from SRSBA for Christmas Tree	
6/5/2019	100.00			<a href="#">06-05-19 Deposit</a>	LeVander, Gillen & Miller	7/22/2019
6/5/2019	400.00			<a href="#">06-05-19 Deposit</a>	Dunkin Donuts	7/22/2019
Pending		(\$94.16)	Ed Iago	<a href="#">08-21-19 Receipts Received</a>	Items purchased for National Guard Event on 8-18-19	
Pending		(\$95.21)	Ed Iago	<a href="#">08-21-19 Oxendale's Receipt</a>	Items purchased for National Guard Event on 8-18-19; Ed Iago paid the bill in full; reimbursed \$100 from anonymous donor	See Non-Monetary Donations Tab
10/3/2019		(\$32.34)	Jan Bremner	<a href="#">08-13-19 Receipt</a>	Expenses for National Guard Event on 8-18-19	
9/25/2019		(\$36.40)	Shirley Buecksler	<a href="#">08-19 Receipt</a>	Expenses for National Guard Event on 8-18-19	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>2,564.99</b>	<b>(\$6,084.08)</b>			<b>Current Balance:</b>	<b>\$2,254.61</b>

Ideal Credit Union Balance as of 11/04/19: \$2,443.98

New or pending since last report

(pending posting of checks for Ed Iago)

Difference: \$189.37

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon  
Treasurer's Report  
2019 Savings Account Transactions

Savings Account						
					Previous Balance (as of 1/01/2019):	\$558.00
Post Date	Deposit Amount	Withdrawal Amount	Reason for Withdrawal	Link to Receipt	Description	Appreciation Letter Sent
3/25/2019	631.00			<a href="#">03-25-19 Deposit</a>	Donation from Oxendale's	3/27/2019
3/25/2019	5,000.00			<a href="#">03-25-19 Deposit</a>	Donation from Tapemark	3/27/2019
4/16/2019	500.00			<a href="#">04-16-19 Deposit</a>	Dakota County NSC	4/16/2019
4/16/2019	5,596.00			<a href="#">04-16-19 Deposit</a>	Transfer from Checking	
6/27/2019	1,000.00			<a href="#">06-27-19 Deposit (Rotary Club)</a>	Donation from Rotary Club	7/22/2019
6/27/2019	500.00			<a href="#">06-27-19 Deposit (Southview AH)</a>	Donation from Southview Animal Hospital	7/22/2019
7/2/2019	100.00			<a href="#">07-02-19 Deposit</a>	Navy Island Plywood	8/22/2019
8/22/2019	1,000.00			<a href="#">08-22-19 Deposit</a>	Mobile Prosystems	8/22/2019
9/24/2019	560.00			<a href="#">09-24-19 Deposit</a>	Donation from Oxendale's	
10/1/2019	935.01			<a href="#">10-01-19 Deposit</a>	Transfer from Commitment to Payment	
10/18/2019	350.00			<a href="#">10-18-19 Deposit</a>	Donation from Solid Construction	
11/1/2019	30.00			<a href="#">11-01-19 Deposit</a>	Donation from Sandy's Hair Salon	
11/04/19: Emailed Ideal Credit Union regarding a \$1.00 Flat Dollar Management Hold on the account since 11/08/2012						
				<a href="#">11-04-19 Email to Ideal re Flat Hold on Account</a>		
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>16,202.01</b>	<b>0.00</b>			<b>Current Balance:</b>	<b>\$16,760.01</b>

Ideal Credit Union Balance as of 11/04/19: \$16,760.01

New or pending since last report

Difference: \$0.00

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon  
Treasurer's Report  
2019 Non-Monetary Donations

Non-Monetary Donations					
Date	Donation Received	Received From	Link to Receipt	Donated To	Appreciation Letter Sent
4/10/2019	Baby and Toddler Supplies	Cub Foods	<a href="#">04-10-19 Thank You Letter - Cub Foods</a>	SSP Vets	4/10/2019
7/22/2019	United States Flag for Albert Park	South St. Paul VFW Post 295	N/A	Albert Park, West St. Paul	Pending
8/18/2019	Groceries for National Guard Event - Value at Difference Between Cost and Normal Retail	Oxendale's	<a href="#">Oxendale's Receipt</a>	National Guard Event 8/12/2019	8/22/2019
8/18/2019	\$100 towards groceries for National Guard Event on 8/18/19	Anonymous donor	<a href="#">08-21-19 Oxendale's Receipt</a>	Anonymous \$100 towards Oxendale's bill of \$195.21; paid directly to Ed Iago	8/22/2019
8/18/2019	\$100 towards television for National Guard Event on 8/18/19	Anonymous donor	<a href="#">Plaza TV &amp; Appliance Receipt</a>	National Guard Event 8/12/2019	8/22/2019
8/18/2019	12 Framed Certificates/Flags for Community and Service Providers	The Framing Place & Gallery	<a href="#">Framing Place Receipts</a>	BTYR for Community and Service Providers	8/22/2019

New or pending since last report

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon  
Treasurer's Report  
2019 Commitments from Other Agencies

South Robert Street Business Association						
					Previous Balance (as of 4/01/2019):	\$1,000.00
Post Date	Amount Disbursed	Credit Added to Account	Paid To	Link to Receipt	Description	Appreciation Letter Sent
4/18/2018	(64.99)		Beyond the Yellow Ribbon	<a href="#">04-18-18 Email to SRSBA</a>	Reimbursement for Christmas Tree from Southview Garden Center	3/27/2019
10/1/2019	(935.01)		Beyond the Yellow Ribbon	<a href="#">10-01-19 Deposit</a>	Transfer from Commitment to Payment	
Commitments for 2019 from South Robert Street Business Association was closed on 10/01/2019						
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>(1,000.00)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>			<b>Current Balance:</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

New or pending since last report