

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

Present: Sgt. Larkin Adey, Jan Bremner, Julie Burkhardt, Ed Iago, Mark Juelfs, Sherrie Le, Brad Legrid, Marijo McBride, Jesse Mettner, Melissa Pond-Benesh, Cpt. Jeffrey Sabatke, Lisa Thomas, Mike Windsperger

1. Call Meeting to Order
Sherrie Le called the meeting to order at 2:35 PM. In Shirley Buecksler's absence, Melissa Pond-Benesh took meeting minutes and notes.
2. Approve Minutes from February 5, 2019, meeting
Motion to approve February 5, 2019, minutes made by Mark Juelfs, seconded by Ed Iago; motion carried.
3. Treasurer's Report
Secretary/treasurer Shirley Buecksler was absent. In her absence, Sherrie gave the treasurer's report.
 - a. Expenditures – The following amounts have not posted to the account as of today's date:
 - i. Sherrie Le was reimbursed \$30.23 for expenses relating to the volunteer appreciation holiday party.
 - ii. Southview Garden Center was reimbursed \$64.99 by the South Robert Street Business Association for the cost of the holiday tree for the military family in need.
 - b. Donations – Not posted to the account as of today's date:
 - i. Special donation report from business liaison Ed Iago:
 - As of today's meeting, Tapemark, West St. Paul's second largest employer behind Dakota County, has given a generous \$5000.00 donation to WSP YR, with the possibility of a three-year commitment of potentially increasing donations in the next two installments.
 - c. Balance – see attached report
4. Old Business:
 - a. Change in Command and NCO staff at the Armory
 - i. We welcome Cpt. Jeffrey Sabatke, who is taking over for Cpt. Duckworth. Cpt. Sabatke is based out of Rochester, Minnesota, and he will be introducing us within the next few months to his wife, who will be the new Family Readiness Group leader. WSP YR will want to be connected with the FRG by post-August and heavily involved and regularly communicating with the FRG by October.
 - b. Farewell to SFC Larkin Adey
 - i. Sherrie Le and Ed Iago presented Sgt. Adey with a framed certificate of appreciation (donated by the Framing Place and Gallery) and a television (in lieu of McDonald's gift certificates) and expressed WSP YR's deep gratitude for the work Sgt. Adey has done for his troops, our community, our country, and our Yellow Ribbon steering committee. We wish Sgt. Adey all the best in his future endeavors, and we will be welcoming his replacement in the upcoming months.
 - ii. Sgt. Adey also shared a thank-you card signed by the guard members for the holiday party for which WSP YR provided a donation to ensure all could attend.

- c. Continued discussions about process of merging with Mendota Heights and possibly Lilydale and Mendota and South St. Paul
 - i. Sherrie Le has scheduled a Yellow Ribbon merger information meeting with Minnesota Department of Military Affairs outreach director Annette Kuyper for Tuesday, April 16, from 1-4 PM, in the West St. Paul Municipal Center's Lobby Conference Room. Stakeholders from Mendota Heights, Lilydale, Mendota, and South St. Paul have been invited.
 - ii. After attending a recent South St. Paul Yellow Ribbon meeting, Ed Iago reports that, at present, SSP YR is not interested in a merger for a variety of reasons, including concern about maintaining the SSP YR's current 501(c)3 status and maintaining their present working relationship with Holman Field and the approximately 900 troops based there.
 - iii. Depending on the results of the merger meeting and subsequent actions taken, there has been discussion about how multiple cities can and should be represented among the Yellow Ribbon officers, including splitting the secretary/treasurer position back into two separate officer positions. (For example, if the chair is a West St. Paul representative, the vice chair could be a Mendota Heights representative, or vice versa.)
- d. Update from meeting between Lisa, the Building Official and WSP Veteran in difficult housing situation.
 - i. The meeting was scheduled to happen last Friday, March 1, but the resident was not home and does not seem to have a working phone number at present. Lisa Thomas reported that the resident's veteran status cannot presently be verified because of a lack of records. Sherrie Le has mentioned the resident does have his dog tags, but, because of the current state of hoarding, they may be difficult for the resident to find. Issue tabled until April meeting.

5. Liaison Reports

a. County and Military Resources Updates

- i. Lisa Thomas reported on the February 27, Dakota County Yellow Ribbon meeting at which Ed Iago spoke on the state, work, and successes of WSP YR, including his exemplary fundraising efforts and community partnership cultivation.
- ii. Brad Legrid reported that the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans [MACV] is nearing its goal of functional zero for veteran homelessness the suburban metro area, thanks in part to the current state administration's strong focus on this issue. While functional zero does not mean absolutely no veterans are experiencing homelessness, it does mean that MACV and metro area county veterans services are aware of and connecting with all known veterans experiencing housing difficulties and homelessness.
 - 1. Community engagement and mental health officer Jesse Mettner was asked about any protocol for police to ask people about military affiliation during calls, welfare checks, stops, etc. No protocol exists at present but a possible action item would be to recommend that police officers ask about veteran or service member status when possible and to refer veterans, especially those experiencing homelessness and related issues, to Jesse Mettner who could in turn refer to service providers, including MACV.

- b. Business/Fundraising Update – Ed
 - i. Building off Lisa Thomas’s report, Ed Iago described some of the inspiring work being done by other Yellow Ribbon groups (including a Homes for Heroes program that could be a model for a realty community partner) and learned about some of the Yellow Ribbon multi-city and countywide coalitions around Minnesota (including Beyond the Yellow Ribbon of Isanti County and, closer to home, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon – South of the River, which covers the whole of Scott County). Ed Iago also connected with Tiffany Kovaleski of Building Healthy Military Communities, who is impressed with the work of WSP YR.
 - ii. Ed Iago reported a generous potential estate donation of valuable furniture that could be sold with proceeds benefiting WSP YR, either on its own or as part of a larger garage sale-type fundraiser. Because of the costs associated with a potential sale and or garage sale event (truck rentals, storage fees, labor hours, etc.) and with no guarantee of a commensurate financial value or of recouping associated costs, the steering committee came to the consensus that, while the charitable offer is very much appreciated, the donation is ultimately declined.
6. New Business:
- a. Summary of Role for Vice Chair Position and expanded role for Business Liaison Officer
 - i. Sherrie Le and Melissa Pond-Benesh met last week to discuss the role of the vice chair, including creating agendas for and leading meetings when the chair is unavailable. The vice chair will also create and maintain a list of veterans and military-related resources that WSP YR can refer to when future requests and needs are brought to the group. Working with other WSP YR members for content, the vice chair can create and maintain a quarterly newsletter updating community partners and stakeholders of news, events, successes, and opportunities to be active with WSP YR.
 - ii. As the Business Liaison Officer, in addition to the business outreach and fundraising efforts, Ed Iago’s role has expanded to including being the initial contact and coordinator for messages and requests coming in to the West St. Paul Yellow Ribbon phone and email.
 - b. Using Library and City Hall as a Resource for FRG meetings during Deployment
 - i. Both Wentworth Library and the West St. Paul Municipal Center have meeting spaces available, depending on the FRG’s need. While the library does not and is unable to offer childcare and supervision, the library does have a 100-person capacity meeting room adjacent to the children’s area if volunteers can be found to look after children.
 - c. WSP Open House Changes and Yellow Ribbon Booth – May
 - i. This year, the West St. Paul Open House will happen on Saturday, May 18, at Harmon Park. A booth or table will need to be scheduled in shifts. Lisa Thomas and Mike Windsperger shared some ideas for swag. Tabled for further discussion at April meeting.
 - ii. Outline pre-deployment work
 - 1. Tabled for April meeting.
 - iii. Outreach to area pastors – postpone for a few months
 - 1. Tabled for April meeting.

7. Next Meeting April 2, 2:30 PM

The next monthly meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2, 2019, from 2:30-3:30 PM, at the West St. Paul Municipal Center administrative conference room.

8. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.



Melissa Pond-Benesh
Recorder