



minutes

Yellowknife Search and Rescue Board Meeting

Date: September 24, 2024

Time: 7:00 PM MT

Location: [MS Teams](#)

Present: Amanda Herbert | Tom Girrion | Amar Maharaj | Andrea Lowing | Danielle Wendehorst |
Jacqueline Mo

Regrets: Kavitha Balaji | Jurjen van der Sluijs

1 Call to Order – 7:02 PM MT

2 Governance

Welcome – Amanda

- Welcome to our new Board members! Amanda provided a brief orientation and mentioned that our meeting agendas are outlined according to the ICS structure.

Insurance (and Recreational Vehicles) – Amanda

- Approved: we submitted our insurance application in August and received an invoice – the fee has not gone up all that much.
- The invoice has been forwarded to Kavitha to action.
- Two of the questions in the insurance application involved RVs; the questions were as follows:
 - Do you own or use Recreational Vehicles?
 - Does your province/territory require you by law to carry insurance for liability?
 - Amanda answered “Yes” to both questions, and noted that the second question is addressed in our existing policy.
 - We also have an Argo, but when we use the Argo, Tom carries personal insurance (thank you, Tom).

Corporate Registries Update – Amanda/Jackie

- Jackie confirmed that we have a new letter of good standing and confirmation of our annual filings.
 - Action Item: Jackie to scan and upload all Corporate Registries paperwork to Dropbox.



-
- Corporate Registries has alerted us to a possible missing provision in our Bylaws. We must wait until the next AGM for the membership to pass any further changes, so the Board will review and address this later in the year.
 - Action Item: Jackie to ask Corporate Registries if they have a sample provision for us to follow/adapt. We had used their sample in the first place, so it's interesting that this provision is missing.

ICS – Amanda

- Amanda took the new Board through the ICS organizational chart again, to get everyone on the same page with regards to ICS.

Agenda Items Spreadsheet – Jackie

- Jackie introduced the new Board to the spreadsheet on Dropbox – anyone can add agenda items as and when. Jackie will circulate the email and link again with the new Board.
- Amanda also took the opportunity to take the new Board through our Dropbox account, which is also organized according to the ICS structure.

3 Command

Overall Coordination – Amanda

- Command is a key role – usually, it's a top-level person who is not part of the Board of Directors, who functions like an Executive Director reporting to the Board. Someone who can connect all the dots.
- Amanda wanted to float an idea by the Board: Andrea and Danielle do not currently have designated responsibilities; would they be interested in learning about this Command function? If we need to coordinate Command functions, perhaps Amanda, Andrea, and Danielle could take this on? No decision needed tonight, just food for thought.
- Also, with such a large Board this year, and a VP now in place (whose job it is to back up the President, Secretary, and Treasurer as needed), it would be great if Amar could learn the functions of these three roles over the course of the year, for the sake of succession planning. It would also simply be useful to have someone else on the Board who would know how to do these roles if needed. Amanda suggested that this year, Amar could try to chair a meeting, keep an eye on how the meeting minutes are recorded, and perhaps even sit down with Kavitha to learn her role.
- In a small organization like ours, one of the things we struggle with is the HR capacity – who can fill what role. Let's think about this over this year, whether there might be a good way to approach this gap and have Members-at-Large play some of those roles.



4 Liaison

SARVAC – Tom

- Tom introduced new Board members to SARVAC, which is the national umbrella SAR organization across the country, and the initiatives they champion. For instance, SARVAC has a national insurance program that we participate in.
- More recently, SARVAC has gotten involved in building a humanitarian workforce to respond to emergencies across the country as needed. For example: when there was a COVID outbreak in Ontario, there was a national call for volunteers and YKSAR had 6 members step up.
- Currently, Bill is likely to step into the role of Humanitarian Workforce Champion for the NWT. He will have the broad role of making sure that the people who want to be involved in the workforce are available.
- Another initiative SARVAC has been heavily involved in is the national K9 standard. Kate Cannell spent 5 years training her dog to be SAR certified, only to have the GNWT not support her efforts. SARVAC now has funding for 3 years to create a new national standard.
- SARVAC is also involved in Prevention. Kate is the AdventureSmart coordinator for the NWT and goes into schools to present programs on preventative safety measures. If you know anyone who would be interested in working with children, Kate welcomes the assistance.
- Danielle and Leila will be going to the 2-day SARVAC Humanitarian Workforce exercise in Ontario. Danielle has offered to take photos, potentially for a recap post to share on social media.

GNWT MNP LLP Report – Amanda

- Amanda reminded all that the report is available for reading on our members' password-protected page. The report summarizes how SAR is handled/not handled in the NWT, and who should be responsible for it. YKSAR currently receives some limited funding through a grant from the GNWT focused on training; the report says we should receive more funding to help cover operating expenses.
- YKSAR therefore needs to decide on next steps, on how we may want to approach this strategically, since it would help immensely to get core funding.
- Action Item: The Board will each take a look at this report for further discussion.
- Amar has experience driving policy (meeting with MPs, discussing the goals of the policy, receiving their support, taking it to Parliament) and believes this model can be modified for YKSAR's purposes. He has a background in Policy and can provide a presentation at an upcoming meeting if needed.
 - Action Item: Amar will draft an email to membership seeking interested members to join a subcommittee to determine strategic next steps for the GNWT Report.



5 Safety

Operations – Tom

- No safety issues or concerns to report at this time.

Post-Wildfire – Amanda

- Searching in post-wildfire environs: during the Beaulieu search, Amanda asked the GNWT Wildfire team for advice on safety, especially with regards to falling trees due to unstable root structures having been burned up. This is especially pertinent given recent wildfire firefighter deaths due to falling trees.
- Possible to make a more solid connection with the GNWT Wildfire team, or with ENR, to get some good information on working safely in post-wildfire environs? Should our searchers, for example, have specific hardhats? The best thing to do is to just avoid wildfire/burn areas, but it would be great if we could have a brief protocol written down.
- Tom reports that the gist of this has been incorporated into the Basic Searcher training already, but we do not have it in writing. Tom will commit to doing this: will talk to ENR and will also work with Danielle, who is trained in this area and could help.
- Danielle added that while dead trees are a big concern, it would also be good to know where they dropped retardant lines, as exposure is not recommended. Having guidelines, clear records of where they're dropping these chemicals, and how searchers can recognize or spot it, would all be beneficial.
- The risk exists in this post-wildfire environment; it's a reality for us now. Let's get on this before someone gets hurt.
- On the Fund Development side, we could seek a grant for safety helmets and other PPE.
- Action Item: Tom and Danielle to start working on this and will get information back to Amanda, who will work with the Fund Development team to obtain whatever equipment is needed, whether it be hardhats or masks, etc.

6 Operations

Training Report and Monthly Drill – Tom

- The Fall Basic Searcher was recently completed, with 15 people registered, of whom 13 completed the classroom session. Some participants had provided advanced notice that they would be unavailable for the field session, so in the end, 9 participants completed the course in full. Tom reports that it's an excellent group of new folks and that he's looking forward to seeing them come out.
- The next training drill will take place on Thursday. The drill will be a good review of things we already know and will be a good opportunity to practice our skills. We have a person who will be needing our assistance; overall, this upcoming drill will provide members with lots of opportunities to problem-solve and practice decision-making skills.
- It will potentially be a fairly busy winter: Tom is working on getting a GPS course, a Team Leader course, and a basic low-angle (Rope Rescue) training course going.



Recent Searches – Tom

- The Beaulieu search concluded in July. Several people have asked about reviving this search as a cold case; if the RCMP allows us to proceed, that would be great.

Monthly Call-Out – Tom

- Bill will still be doing the monthly call-outs via text message. Bill emailed confirmation that he will continue in this role; asked whether the membership list was up to date.

7 Planning

Search Stats Database – Amanda/Tom

- Tom will take care of keeping this database updated for now. We would still like to have someone cover it in the future.
- Once we have some admins onboarded, Tom can show more members how this is done.

Mapping Software – Amanda/Tom

- A YKSAR member donated a one-year SARTopo app subscription to YKSAR recently because it proved invaluable during the Beaulieu search. Tom reports that Bill has suggested we move away from ARCGIS towards SARTopo, because it is cheaper and very easy to use (anyone can learn how to use it in half an hour). Bill may be recommending to the Board in the near future that we stop paying for the ARCGIS licence and move fully to SARTopo. Right now, Tom reports that we are using both.
- Action Item: The Board would like a formal recommendation to move away from ARCGIS (MapSAR) towards SARTopo. Tom will chat with Bill and return to us.

8 Fund Development

DeBeers' Ambassadors for Good Grant – Amanda

- Good news: we have finally been approved for \$8,500. Michelle Peters will continue to be the point person on this project and will work with Tom and Jurjen to get the equipment purchased and deployed. We are still waiting for the funds to arrive; it's as yet unclear how the money will be sent our way.
- Amanda notes that we will have to do some reporting on this at the end of the year.

Bingos – October 20, 4:45-9:45pm – Amanda

- The September bingo was moved to Sunday, October 20 because of the Basic Searcher dates. We need 5 volunteers to help, from 4:45pm to 9:45pm.
- Action Item: Amar will reach out to The Rotary Club to see if any volunteers can help work our bingo on YKSAR's behalf.



Ongoing Operating Expenses: YK Community Foundation, City of YK, GNWT Report – Amanda

- Amanda would like to move forward on all of these potential funding avenues to address our deficit – once we figure out the Volunteer Resources team.

Fund Development Team – Amanda

- Amanda will work on this once the Volunteer Resources team is shored up.
-

9 Logistics

Equipment Director's Report – Jurjen via email to Amanda

- Ambassadors for Good Grant: once the funds arrive, Jurjen will start making hardware purchases. The Board will have to discuss the monthly subscription costs for Starlink and the InReach units. Jurjen is open to charging these to his credit card, but it will require more frequent reimbursement; plus, it will be tied to a person for 3 years.
- Alternatively, we could look at getting a prepaid VISA in YKSAR's name, which might make accounting a bit easier to manage for these next 3 years.

Volunteer Resources: Transition/Interim Plan; Access Software; Google for Nonprofits – Amanda

- Bill took a few Board members through his process a few weeks ago. Bill can support training somebody new but will be dedicating his time on YKSAR to mapping and searches.
 - Amanda would like to onboard Aingeal ASAP to the Access database while her membership application and criminal record check is being completed.
 - Amanda would like to propose that Kavitha perhaps take on Membership Receipts – will check with Kavitha at the next meeting.
 - Access Software: At the moment, only Tom and Amanda have Microsoft Access on their laptops. GNWT employees have a 30% discount, but Amanda will check with TechSoup on whether we might be able to get it for free.
-

10 Finance

Deficit – Amanda

- Our deficit is around \$2K this year and will likely be more.
- Amanda will prioritize getting the Fund Development team up and running as soon as Volunteer Resources is taken care of.

Toole Peet Insurance Renewal – Amanda

- Amanda has forwarded to Kavitha.

E-transfers and Membership Receipts – Amanda

- Amanda will check with Kavitha; perhaps these can be taken on by the Treasurer role.
- Andrea has a few cheques from new members, from the recent Basic Searcher; Jackie also has one money order by mail.



-
- Action Item: Andrea will pass her cheques to Jackie; Jackie to deposit all at BMO.

Mailbox Fee – Jackie

- We have received the annual invoice for the mailbox fee.
- Action Item: Jackie will pay this first and obtain reimbursement from Kavitha.

11 Information (formerly Public Information)

Basic Searcher Recruitment – Amanda

- The Information Team’s advertising efforts in advance of the Basic Searcher resulted in a great turnout.
- Amanda reports that the team made a new Facebook page to link new people to our private Facebook page.

Volunteer Resources Recruitment – Amanda

- Amanda will try to onboard Aingeal ASAP. It would be nice to have this team consist of 2-3 people. If we cannot find volunteers to fill this team, Amanda wonders if we should advertise for it – but in the meantime, we will get Aingeal on board first.

Website – Amanda

- Keller owns our domain name but has not been responsive to our requests for improvement or request for fixes. We may need to get our own domain name and own it ourselves (YKSAR.ca is available). Our current website will come up for renewal in January/February; we can try to build up a new website at YKSAR.ca in the meantime.
- If we connect it to/sign up for Google for Nonprofits, we could get email addresses associated with this domain name – e.g. info@yksar.ca. Google for Nonprofits might also give us more cloud storage – more than what we have for our Dropbox. It would be nice to have 1 TB and not worry about space constraints.
- Action Item: The Board will think about this and return to discuss.

12 Next Meeting and Away Dates – Wednesday, October 23, 2024. Tom and Jackie away October 1-15.

13 Adjournment – 9:02 PM MT
