



August 5-19, 2020 Electronic Meeting “Minutes”

Overview of the August process:

As you know, given the extraordinarily challenging circumstances in which our communities find themselves due to COVID-19, the PoT2 organizers decided to conduct our second online “virtual” meeting. We asked members to consider making a pitch for a local non-profit organization and to submit their names and their chosen organization by email by August 7. The 3 randomly chosen people were notified on August 8 and given until August 13 to write a maximum 500-word pitch. We employed the survey platform Survey Monkey to present the 3 written pitches to the membership, who had until Tuesday, August 18 to read and then cast their vote for their chosen recipient. We discovered these messages went into some members’ spam folders, and so extended the deadline for those non-responders until Wednesday, August 19.

Prior Recipient Report:

As you know, the recipient of our support from our last “online” meeting was the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund. This fund was initiated by the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut (CFECT), who solicited and reviewed grant applications from local non-profit organizations that specifically addressed needs that arose as a result of COVID-19. In response to our \$11,000 donation we heard from their president/CEO and senior development officer:

“This is great news. We are delighted and honored to have you join our “Circle of Kindness.” This support sends a strong message about a caring community working together for the greater good.” – Maryam Elahi, President and CEO

“This is such exciting news! What a strong impact this will make in our community. The empathy and caring that I have witnessed thus far never ceases to amaze me.” – Lauren Parada, Senior Development Officer

In a recent communication CFECT reported: “The first round of Neighbors for Neighbors Fund grants put more than \$473,000* out into the community to meet basic needs, shore up the income security of residents, keep our children’s learning moving forward amid school and summer camp closures, and ensure that people working in our nonprofits, schools and other workplaces are safe. We plan to launch our second round of RFPs to the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund in September.”

*Note that Power of Together 2 contributed \$11,000 of that amount via our membership, but our effective contribution was double that because of a matching donation provided by an anonymous donor. In other words, we were responsible for almost 5% of total contributions to this fund!

For more information on how the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund was used, please visit the following link:

<https://www.cfect.org/About/News-Events/All-News/neighbors-for-neighbors-fund>

Presentations:

Nine members offered their names to make a pitch. Of those, the 3 pitches randomly chosen to present to the membership were:

1. **Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center**, presented by Kathy Calnen. While most of us associate the PNC with its Food Pantry, the organization also provides direct financial assistance for rent, mortgage and utility payments. PNC Executive Director, Susan Sedensky explains that her agency always sees an uptick in requests for rental/mortgage assistance at the end of summer when seasonal jobs are winding

down but this year the demand is much greater due to Coronavirus layoffs. The PNC partners with other local agencies such as the Johnnycake Center, Warm Center and St Vincent De Paul to provide funds to keep families in their homes and sustain them until they can get a job and catch up on their payments.

2. **Fellowship House Ministries**, presented by Dave Stevenson. Fellowship House Ministries, based in Groton, needs support to continue the services that prevent reincarceration for the men released from prison who stay with them. Most come to Fellowship House from prison with nothing but the clothing on their back and a desire to “make it” in today’s difficult world. During their stay, the men work at jobs in the community, leaving at the end of their sentences with an average savings of \$3,500. But due to Covid-19, the men have lost precious time because for months they weren’t able to go out to find jobs, attend counseling meetings, or spend time with their families.
3. **Guardians of the Purple Heart**, presented by Christina Clark. Guardians of the Purple Heart was established to help combat-wounded veterans from the State of Connecticut by providing basic needs and essentials that other organizations are unable to provide. Due to Covid-19 the organization was unable to conduct two fundraisers that usually bring in upwards of \$10,000. As a result, they are unable to provide this year’s Purple Heart Recipient with all his needs, which would ensure a safe home, a stable living environment, and freedom from struggles brought about by his combat wounds.

Outcome and Payment:

We had a very good response to the survey. Understanding that some members may well be experiencing financial challenges during this time, we noted that opting out of this giving cycle was understandable, though voting was still encouraged. The chosen recipient was **Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center**.

For safety and expediency, we have requested that members pay through our online donation mechanism, Givinga. Instructions will be forwarded in the email accompanying these minutes.

Next Meeting:

Our next regularly scheduled meeting is 7 pm, November 10, 2020 at the Mystic YMCA. We are uncertain at this time about whether we will change the venue for this meeting, move the date, or add an additional meeting and opportunity to support our community. We will keep you apprised.