

## **Sister Cities Lawrence**

### **Governing Board Meeting**

**November 8, 2023, Minutes**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ken Albrecht, Bill Keel, Jan Miller, James Hilliard (virtually), Kathleen Hodge (virtually), Diana Carlin (Virtually), Bob Schumm

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sheri Hamilton, Kelly Scholz, Lisa Larsen

CITY LIAISON: Stephen Mason

GUESTS PRESENT: Sara Lechtenberg-Kasten, Steve Nowak, and Phyllis Farrar

Keel opened the meeting at 5:34 pm in the conference room of the Watkins Museum.

#### **Meeting Materials Provided:**

- Meeting agenda
- Financial report
- Hiratsuka report
- Website committee report
- Membership report
- October draft minutes
- Report on potential Chilean sister city
- Publicity report

#### **Announcements and Guests**

- Sara Lechtenberg-Kasten and Phyllis Farrar were present as guests.
- We need candidates for Treasurer and Secretary. Carlin will check with another nonprofit that hires a financial advisor to handle the finances. Hilliard is willing to serve as Hiratsuka representative again.
- Steve Nowak announced that the exhibit will be completed on December 4 and will be open for our annual meeting on the second floor.

#### **Approval of October 2023 Minutes**

- Albrecht moved and Miller seconded approval of the October minutes as amended. Approved unanimously. Amendments: The time for the start of the annual meeting should be changed to 7 pm. Farrar was not present but a report was submitted.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **Membership Committee—Farrar**

- 3 new memberships added for 2024 – 2 individuals and one family
- 2023 memberships: 31 families, 7 individuals

- Zeffy project - the online payment process includes a membership management system. A trial run using only the membership information for Governing Board members will be set up. Farrar will prepare the 2024 membership renewal form on Zeffy. Governing Board members need to renew 2024 membership through the new Zeffy account. The trial period would be in November. That would allow us to shift over to Zeffy before a renewal letter in December and announcement at the Annual Meeting. Zeffy will send renewal letters. Hodge asked if Zeffy will send notices to those who have not renewed with a reminder and it does provide that service.

**Website Committee—Farrar**

Report for November 8

- One typo was corrected
- The Eutin Timeline needs work and the recent exchanges and article from the Lawrence Journal World need to be added. The article sent more people to the website; numbers were doubled.

Analytics report for past 30 days:

Visitors

Reporting period	October 2023
(30 days)	Oct 10-Nov 8
Total Visits	326
Highest day	28
Lowest day	4
Avg daily visits	11
Total Page Views	683

**Public Relations Committee-Miller**

- Miller reported on the successful Lawrence Journal World front page article on the Eutin and Hiratsuka exchanges and mentioned the Iniades relationship. The city report that is inserted in the water bill also had a story on the exchange with the student visit to the city commission. The newspaper is interested in follow up stories, including our fundraiser.

**Financial Aid Committee—Hodge**

- Hilliard provided Hodge with information about the Hiratsuka chaperones and is conducting the background checks. Eutin needs to be checked again based on our new rules.

**Fundraising Committee**

The International Trivia Night will be scheduled in spring 2024. Carlin will continue to run the fundraiser and suggested we secure a date after spring break and Easter.

**Chaperone Committee—Hodge**

Hodge reported that background checks are being conducted on all 2024 chaperones.

### **Scholarship Committee**

- The student who was supposed to present to the Lawrence Breakfast Optimist Club did not attend when scheduled, but we will find an alternative date. Because the student did not attend as scheduled, the club will not fund for 2024 but will consider our request for 2025 if we do fulfill the commitment. The Rotary club also wants to schedule the scholarship student.

### **FOI (Friends of Iniades) –Schumm**

- Schumm was in Greece and met with Dimitra Pitsikou. The meeting took place on election day. The current mayor was involved in a run-off and lost. Dimitra will arrange a meeting with the new mayor. Schumm remains in communication and will send a congratulatory letter and will arrange for the Lawrence mayor to also send a letter. Schumm read a draft the letter that includes the desire to have the relationship include Messolonghi.
- Hodge suggested that the letter mention that we have had an exchange.

### **FOH (Friends of Hiratsuka)—Hilliard**

- Hilliard apologized for the confusion about the date the student needed to present and will arrange for a presentation later for the Optimists.
- The coordinator will be ending her term and will be returning to Japan unless she finds a position in the U.S.
- Nine students have been selected for the 2024 Hiratsuka Student delegation. Six girls and three boys. Schools represented are Free State, Lawrence High, Bishop Seabury, and Liberty Memorial Middle School. Application responses were low but somewhat expected. This year we had difficulty distributing information within the schools and relied heavily on our website application process and a few internal school volunteers. We need to have discussions with the school district about the exchange in light of new policies about soliciting for non-district activities.
- Trip chaperones pending successful background confirmations for the 2024 Trip will be David Cornelius (a pre-pandemic chaperone) and Katie Trumble (a previous student delegate 2014,2016 and 2017). Both chaperones have been submitted to Kathleen for background investigations.
- First parent meeting for the 2024 Hiratsuka Student delegation will be Saturday, November 11 - 2 pm at the Lawrence Public Library – Meeting Room C . Meeting dates for trip preparation, recommended trip payment schedules and other general information will be presented to the group.
- Several Members of Friends of Hiratsuka (Bob and Patsy Moody, Carol Shankel, Kevin Boatright and James Hilliard) participated in a ZOOM call with Friends of Lawrence on Sunday eve - October 29<sup>th</sup>. Purpose of the meeting was to update each city with the latest news (Pandemic, Future Delegations and General Information). Due to the COVID pandemic our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration that was held virtual. It was mutually decided that Lawrence will host a Hiratsuka

Adult delegation in October 2025 and Hiratsuka will host a Lawrence Adult Delegation in October 2026. This will coincide with our 35<sup>th</sup> Friendship Anniversary.

### **FOE (Friends of Eutin)—Albrecht**

- Albrecht reported that the student delegation was a tremendous success and acknowledged everyone who assisted.
- There was a podcast with some of the participants, and Albrecht wanted to know if it will be posted on the website. It needs to be edited.
- There was a debrief meeting with Steven Arbeau about the 2023 trip. He will chaperone again. His goal is to have 12 students.
- Albrecht and Keel had a zoom last week with the Kleins about the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Frank Baron is working on musicians as part of the celebration. They would like us to move our timeline back so that we can see the renovated opera house. It will be inaugurated on June 28<sup>th</sup>. This would overlap with the high school group. The musicians' schedules are being checked. The delegation would arrive on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and have events prior to the 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Discussions continue with the school district about collaborations on the exchange due to new district policies.

### **Old Business—Potential New Sister City: Tocopilla, Chile**

- Sara Lechtenberg-Kasten sent a report with updates to the governing board prior to the meeting. There is a new contact person, Claudia Olea, a teacher at St. John's, to assist with coordinating at the Lawrence end. She reviewed the two documents she sent.
- Lechtenberg-Kasten and her husband have offered to host a Chilean cultural event with food and wine.
- Miller asked what the next step is for the Lawrence side. Lechtenberg-Kasten said that she needs a formal vote that we want to be a match. Schumm said that we need a resolution of intent. Keel noted that at some point we need to let the city commission know that we want to add a sister city.
- Lechtenberg-Kasten reported that the Chilean side wants to work with us and want to start doing webinars and informal activities while we are working on this. There is no funding from the Department of Energy without some type of formal agreement on our side. If we can get funding, we can bring members of their advisory committee here. She also said that there are opportunities for student exchange.
- Schumm asked about the Department of Energy interests and Lechtenberg-Kasten noted that funding is always contingent on administration priorities.
- Keel asked for a formal proposal and expressed the need for Lisa Larsen to review. Farrar suggested that we use the past agreements that are on the website as a template. The city will have to approve. Schumm moved and Albrecht seconded a motion for L-K to make a formal request at the December meeting.
- Miller thanked L-K for all that she has done to move this forward.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. Schumm moved and Albrecht seconded.

The next meeting is December 13, 2023, at 5:30 pm at the Watkins Museum Community Room with the Annual Meeting following at 7 pm.

Submitted by

Diana B. Carlin, secretary