

Sister Cities Lawrence

Governing Board Meeting

March 8, 2023, Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ken Albrecht, Bill Keel, Diana Carlin, Jan Miller, Kelly Scholz, Lisa Larsen, Kathleen Hodge, Bob Schumm, James Hilliard

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sheri Hamilton

GUESTS PRESENT: Phyllis Farrar, website committee chair; John Rogers, foreign service retiree and one of Keel's former students. Melissa Johnson, Hiratsuka Friends member and chaperone.

Chair Bill Keel opened the meeting at 5:32 pm in the conference room of the Watkins Museum; the meeting was also available virtually with Carlin and Larsen attending virtually.

Meeting Materials Provided:

- Meeting agenda
- Website committee report
- Membership report
- Hiratsuka report
- February draft minutes
- Trivia flyer and worksheet

Announcements and Guests

- Keel introduced John Rogers and Phyllis Farrar. Rogers made a brief presentation on what a US city can do to help Ukrainian cities when the conflict is over and if a sister city's relationship is possible.
- Keel read a thank you note from Gary Bjorge in reference to a sympathy card sent upon Nancy's passing.

Approval of Minutes

- Scholz moved and Hodge seconded approval of the minutes as corrected. Approved unanimously.

Review of Financials—No Report

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Website—Farrar

- The report is attached to the minutes.
- The website donate glitch was corrected.
- There were difficulties editing some sections of the website due to the size. Farrar has corrected.
- Traffic was higher in February by 10-15%. Views were the highest in six months.
- A membership news blast was sent about renewals and recruiting for Hiratsuka.

- The website was reviewed with the KU Museum Studies class to assist with their projects and she reported on the visit with the class and the questions and issues that arose. Discussion was held on the scope of the project, especially gifts and other artifacts that are in various locations in the city, KU, and members' homes. Farrar will start a Google document and collect information regarding gift locations and type.
- Farrar paid for renewals related to the website and will submit invoices for reimbursement.

Membership Committee— Farrar

- Farrar referenced the problems with the donate system and that she and Hamilton need to reconcile payments with the list of who submitted reports.

Fundraising Committee—Carlin

- Carlin shared the flyer and amendments were made. The worksheet was shared and everyone was asked to submit their contributions by the end of the week. The contest is April 16.
- Members were encouraged to share the flyer with friends and post.

Publicity Committee-Miller

- Miller will publicize the trivia contest and Farrar will put it on the website.

Financial Aid Committee—Keel

- Keel has one financial aid request from Eutin and Hilliard has five for Hiratsuka.

Chaperone Committee—Hodge

- Hodge reported that the committee needs to meet and she will schedule the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to clarify policies that are not clear. Specifically as policies related to vetting chaperones and background checks. Discussion followed.
- The chaperones are set for the upcoming trips.

Audit Committee-Scholz

- The audit committee met and there are no discrepancies.
- Scholz and Hamilton need to discuss retained earnings.

FOI (Friends of Iniades)—

- Schumm reported that nothing new has happened since his last report and that he sent a letter to the mayor but there was no response.

FOE (Friends of Eutin)—Albrecht

- Albrecht reported that there are five students fully committed and one is pending. The pending is a result of vaccination requirements. Discussion took place regarding vaccines and mask wearing on the plane and in airports. We need a plan in place in case a student gets COVID on the trip.
- There are 12 girls coming to Lawrence from Eutin and the Lawrence delegation has five confirmed males and the possible is a female.

- There is a request from Stephan regarding one of the 2019 delegates whose son wants to do an internship with Reuter organ. The company is now out of business so it will not happen.

FOH (Friends of Hiratsuka)—Hilliard

- Hilliard submitted a written report that is attached.
- Hilliard introduced Melissa Johnson who will be the chaperone, and Yoshie Hisatomi who is the outreach coordinator. Nine students are interested at this point.
- The major concern is finalizing the airfare; discussion took place regarding timing of payments and full versus multiple payments. Scholz noted that the budget is such that we can cover the cost of the airfare to keep fares lower and then collect from parents.
- We need to make sure that the online payment system is working and that payments are credited to the right student. We have a different payment system. We need to include an extra 3% for credit card payments.
- Hodge moved and Scholz seconded that we advance the funds to purchase the tickets to save \$400 per ticket. Passed unanimously.
- Scholz moved that we provide \$3600 from the reserve fund to cover expenses incurred as a result of fewer students attending due to high airfare and continued impact of the pandemic. The purpose of the reserve is for this type of situation and it will help keep costs down for students. Schumm seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Hilliard provided scholarship applications.

Schumm moved and Hodge seconded adjournment until. The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

The next meeting is April 12, 2023, at 5:30 pm at the Watkins Museum Community Room.

Submitted by

Diana B. Carlin, Secretary

Website Committee Report, March 8, 2023

Phyllis Farrar, Website Committee Chair, reporting

Our website is www.sistercitieslawrence.org

Committee member: Jeannie Houts

Postings/updates to the website:

- Posted approved January GB minutes.
- Edited Board and Policies page - 2023 officers list, but still **need new picture**.
- Chatted with Stripe and Squarespace Help desks to identify break in our online payment process. Eventually identified that URL on last page of our Google form was incomplete. Repaired by 2/16/23.

- On recommendation of Squarespace Help desk, I have made the payment process available without going through the Google form so that renewing/continuing members can pay without completing a new form. This should make payment easier for the majority of our members.
- Responded to an email from Stephen Klein (Friends of Lawrence in Eutin) saying that Eutin Timeline page was not available. This page is extremely slow to load (and impossible to edit) because it is overloaded.
- On the recommendation of Squarespace Help desk, I have begun cutting the Timeline pages into 10-year sections, creating a new page for each decade, to cut down on loading time. Am working on the Eutin Timeline first since its current overload is making it very difficult to open or edit.

Analytics for 30 days of visitor traffic on the website are summarized in the chart below. The previous 3 months are shown for comparison. Activity likely due to new membership year, exchange participants, research of the class responsible for creating a plan for gifts to be archived at Watkins.

Reporting period	February 2023	January 2023	December 2022	November 2022
(30 days)	Feb. 6- Mar.7	Jan. 9 – Feb. 7	Dec. 4 – Jan. 2	Nov. 7-Dec. 6
Total Visits	266	244	150	176
Highest day	26	17	19	16
Lowest day	1	1	1	1
Avg daily visits	8.9	8.1	5	5.9
Total Page Views	505	466	271	276

Geography of page views:

U.S	210
Germany	28
Japan	8
Greece	1

Total of 271 page views (past 30 days) in order of popularity:

Home (149 views)	Don and Steffi (9)
Become a member (58 views)	Iniades Timeline (9)
Eutin (52 views)	Kelly and Arne (8)
Hiratsuka (43 views)	The Sacred Stone (8)
Board and Policies (37)	Kris and Inga (8)
Eutin Timeline (29)	Accepting Eutin HS exchange applications (5)
New and Events (23)	Fran and Mat (5)
Iniades (16)	Japanese Friendship Garden attracts tours (4)
Hiratsuka Timeline (11)	The rest had fewer than four views

Website expenses:

During the coming month two annual fees for the website will automatically be charged to my personal credit card - \$12 for the domain name (sistercitieslawrence.org) and \$312 for Squarespace web hosting. I will be requesting reimbursement.

Memberships

The online payment system did not function between January 29 and Feb. 14. Confirmation from the Treasurer, S. Hamilton, is needed to confirm whether all payments have been completed.

Renewals since our last report are:

Individual	3 (1 New)
Family	2 (1 New)
Business	0

The first E-News blast of the year went out with a reminder to renew and notes about Hiratsuka and Eutin exchanges taking place again. Recipients were:

- All 2022 members and 2023 members to date, sent on 2/20
- All families who hosted Eutin exchange in 2022, sent 2/21
- All families who will be involved in Hiratsuka exchange 2023, sent 2/22

Total membership to date: 24 memberships - 7 individual, 17 family.

A membership roster will be provided separately, current as of 3/7/2023.

Hiratsuka Report

3-8-2023

Friends of Hiratsuka Report

Two chaperones and nine students have been selected for the 2023 Hiratsuka Delegation.

Meetings are scheduled for every third Sunday. The first meeting was March 5. All meetings held in Room C at the Lawrence Public Library.

Preparation Meeting Schedule

March 26 th ,April 16 th ,May 7 th ,June 4 th and June 17 th meeting time 12:00-5:00 PM

Lead Chaperone- Melissa Ross

Support Chaperone- Rachel Bennett

Japanese Outreach Coordinator- Yoshie Hisatomi