

**Sister Cities Lawrence  
Governing Board Meeting  
June 14, 2023, Minutes**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ken Albrecht, Bill Keel, Jan Miller, Bob Schumm, Lisa Larsen (virtually), James Hilliard, Sheri Hamilton

MEMBERS ABSENT: Diana Carlin, Kathleen Hodge, Kelly Scholz

CITY LIAISON: Stephen Mason

GUESTS PRESENT: Phyllis Farrar, website committee (virtual), Sara Lechtenberg-Kasten

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Chair Bill Keel opened the meeting at 5:?? pm in the conference room of the Watkins Museum.

**Meeting Materials Provided:**

- Meeting agenda
- Website committee report
- Treasurer's report
- April draft minutes
- Publicity report

**Announcements and Guests**

- Keel introduced guest Sara Lechtenberg-Kasten who has a proposal for a new sister city relationship.

**Approval of Minutes**

- Miller moved and Albrecht seconded approval of the minutes as submitted. Approved unanimously.

**Review of Financials—Hamilton**

- Hamilton will provide May financials after processing trip payments and expenses.
- Hamilton provide updates on Eutin and Hiratsuka payments. She has processed Eutin and Hiratsuka payments. The debit card is working well in Eutin. Every student traveler has a membership attached. The travel account is now up to \$5000 to access for Eutin. We now have a credit card with a \$5000 limit.
- Hamilton needs a volunteer to check the mailbox at the Watkins for the credit card and get it to Melissa Yolanda Ross for the Hiratsuka trip. Miller volunteered.
- Keel noted that we need students to pay for the tickets prior to purchase.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Website—Farrar**

- Farrar presented highlights of her written report. There is a new posting of a news article about the Hiratsuka trip. The March and April minutes are now posted.

### **Membership Committee—Farrar**

- Farrar reported that all of the Eutin and Hiratsuka families have joined with family memberships and there is a new roster. Everyone received the new membership list with the website report. The list can be used since there are emails on the list. Each member has identified if they want Eutin, Hiratsuka, Iniades or all three.
- Total membership is 30 households.

### **Public Relations Committee-Miller**

- Miller made progress with the Journal-World. She has the contact for the cultural news editor, Austin . He wants to do a story on the Eutin trip when they return and on Hiratsuka before they leave and will mention the November trivia fundraiser. Bill, Ken, James, and Bob are likely to be interviewed.
- There was communication with the Lawrence Times.

### **Financial Aid Committee—Keel**

- Hilliard reported that a student dropped and was receiving a scholarship and that money was returned to SCL.
- There is a \$500 contribution from Central Rotary forthcoming. Keel was the speaker for their meeting last week.

### **Chaperone Committee—Hodge and Albrecht**

- Hodge is going to ask if we can do an annual rather than monthly payment for the background checks. Scholz is the contact and she is going to check to see if it can be changed.

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

- There is no news since the mayoral election has not taken place.

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

- Albrecht reported that the students are halfway through the trip and the chaperone is doing well.
- Hamilton received a report on their activities and expenses and summarized. All that is left are the day trips; they have been to Berlin.

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

- The farewell party is June 25 at Centennial Park and they depart on the 29<sup>th</sup>. There are nine students going.
- We are still in need of Home Stay families for 5 days each. There are three male chaperones all over 21. They are here July 21-31. The students are middle to high school age.
- Nine student delegates and two chaperones are in the final stages of trip preparation.
- We need to find a better way to track the financial side. Currently Hilliard purchases tickets and gifts on his personal credit card and he does not want to have future chaperones do this. Keel noted that in the past collecting before purchase was required.

This year was later in getting the process started and we will return to an earlier schedule. Hamilton said that the credit cards can be used to assist in the future with one per city. Schumm suggested that we use the funds we have in our treasury to purchase tickets and gifts in a timely manner and then be reimbursed when students make payments, and we have always collected the funds. Hamilton discussed ways to account for the process. Hilliard noted that the budget provides information about trip costs to write a check.

- Hilliard asked how to book the community room. Keel said to contact Steve Nowak to schedule. The chaperone party will be midway through the visit and will send the date and times.

### **New Business—Potential New Sister City**

- Sara Lechtenberg-Kasten introduced herself as a lifelong Lawrencean and a KU undergraduate and law graduate. She has done international work in recent years and has returned to Lawrence. She presented on behalf of the Department of Energy. She is looking for a match for a coal mining town, Tocopilla, Chile. Lawrence was on the list of potential cities and the Chileans are interested because there is an energy plant transitioning from coal to renewables. They want a technical exchange and its impact on community and cultural life. They are also interested in knowing how solar energy is being deployed and they are interested in the new Panasonic plant and its impact on the Lawrence culture. She previously sent the board an email with background.
- Lechtenberg-Kasten can volunteer time to work on this project. They are pitching to other cities. This is an opportunity for a Spanish-speaking sister city.
- Schumm explained some past attempts at other sister cities that did not work and some of the background on the three we have that made them work and explained the criteria for future partnerships. One of the criteria is that it should be a similar size to Lawrence, similar interests, easy transportation to and from, ability for their group to afford to come to Lawrence and to host us. Exchanges are the cornerstone of a successful collaboration.
- Discussion followed on specifics about the city and how it matches the criteria and the need to have a core group in the community to support. There is some funding and there is currently support for the Tocopilla delegation to visit the potential cities on the DOE's list. They are also looking at State Department funding potential.
- At this point there has not been discussion of youth exchanges, but that should be considered.
- The next step is to develop a core group and secure city support and then have Lechtenberg-Kasten meet with them. She explained that every step takes time due to government processes.
- Larsen indicated that she finds it an interesting possibility.

Schumm moved and Hamilton seconded adjournment until. The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

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

Submitted by Diana B. Carlin, Secretary