

CHARLOTTESVILLE SISTER CITIES COMMISSION AGENDA

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 4:30pm – 6:00pm

CitySpace, Large Conference Room, 100 Fifth Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

CALL TO ORDER

1. Approval of Minutes – December 3, 2024; January 14, 2025

2. Chair’s Report – Edward Herring

3. Finance Report – Casey Eriksen

4. City Reports

- a.** Huehuetenango, Guatemala – Edward Herring
- b.** Besancon, France – Elizabeth Smiley
- c.** Poggio a Caiano, Italy – Stella Mattioli
- d.** Winneba, Ghana – Kimberly Hayes

5. Committee Reports

- a.** Grants – Kimberly Hayes
- b.** Education – Alicen Brown
- c.** Programs & Events – Sylvia New Strawn
- d.** Outreach & Communications – Claire Denton-Spalding

ADJOURNMENT

Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the public meeting may call (434) 987-1267 or submit a request via email to ada@charlottesville.gov. The City of Charlottesville requests that you provide 48 hours’ notice so that proper arrangements may be made.

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

Tuesday December 3, 2024

CitySpace Main Conference Room

Present: Kimberly Hayes, Edward Herring, Sal Moschella, Sylvia New Strawn, Cherry Stewart, Murray Susen, Claire Denton-Spalding

Absent: Alicen Brown, Stella Mattioli, Casey Erickson, Elizabeth Smiley

Non-voting Members Present: Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council

Meeting opened at 4:37 pm. Edward Herring presided.

Late arrivals noted: N/A

- I. Edward Herring opened the floor to three visitors who were attending from a UVA democracy class

- II. **Approval of Minutes** (Edward Herring)
Full Commission meeting - October 1, 2024
Motion to approve as written: Sal Moschella
Motion seconded: Sylvia New Strawn
Motion approved

Approval of Minutes (Edward Herring)
Full Commission meeting - November 12, 2024
Motion to approve as written: Kimberly Hayes
Motion seconded: Murray Susen
Motion approved

- III. **Discussion: SCI State Conference**

- A. The CSCC hosted the SCI Virginia Statewide Meeting on Saturday, November 16. Cherry, Sal, Kimberly, Sylvia, Elizabeth and Edward attended. Former Mayor Dave Norris attended virtually. Cherry brought coffee and gifts for the attendees. After lunch, Edward presented a list of Charlottesville Sister City events. Charlottesville has a boards and commissions structure, while other cities like Norfolk and Virginia beach have director models. The conference went longer, as many groups discussed their events.
- B. Sal mentioned speakers who spoke about how they bring tourists to sister cities. Cherry said that her big takeaway was using native language speaker volunteers in the community who help with fundraising and execution of the event. Fred Blanton said that lots of other groups are doing this and we should as well. Max said that the bylaws state that CSCC should reach out and utilize volunteers. Cherry suggested that we reach out to more volunteers through the committee

structure. Sylvia said that the sister city group was diverse and exciting. Kimberly wished there was more individual time meeting with representatives from other sister cities. Cherry suggested hosting a Zoom or a meeting with the Richmond group and Edward agreed. Cherry and Edward will discuss.

IV. Discussion: CSCC Long-term Goals

- A. Claire asked if people had any updates or changes to the strategic plan.
- B. Edward wants to add language under a "Responsibilities" section at the end. The text of this "Responsibilities" section will say "A liaison role will coordinate between our mayor and city council and any sister city or friendship city contacts."
- C. Edward spoke with Mayor Wade about this idea and he agreed. This came up in relation to his trip to Ghana this year and former Mayor Snook's trip to Ghana last year. Even if it is a private trip, we should still communicate with city counselors. Max asked to include a sentence about what the liaison role looks like.
- D. Claire asked about the objective section about fundraising and if CSCC could do it. Max provided an update and was able to verify donations CSCC received around the early 2000s. According to Charlottesville's Finance Director, it is okay to fundraise, but we need to develop fundraising guidelines. Edward said that we will put together a fundraising committee / working group to develop the guidelines and begin to fundraise.
 - 1. **Motion to approve as modified by adding the "Responsibilities" section:** Sylvia New Strawn
 - 2. **Motion seconded:** Sal Moschella
 - 3. **Motion approved**

V. Website Revision Update – Claire Denton-Spalding & Murray Susen

- A. Claire has updated the website with the list of items to update that came from the annual meeting. She said that the website will be updated once we release the grant application.

VI. Traveling Trunk Recommendation – Edward Herring & Claire Denton-Spalding

- A. Edward said that we need to work to create a brochure about Charlottesville that we can send to our Sister Cities. The business bureau and Chamber of Commerce have some resources. Edward would like the brochure to be in English. He would also like to ask our Sister Cities to create brochures and we will translate and print them. Edward will set up a meeting with Charlottesville tourist organizations in January and will report back to the commission.

VII. City Reports

- A. Huehuetenango, Guatemala - Edward Herring
 - 1. Mayor Wade will go to Huehue October 10-16. Edward is coordinating with Ixtatan to be Mayor Wade's guide. They will be picked up at the

airport in a van and use that van the entire trip. Approximately 10-20 people may be able to come on the trip.

B. Besançon - Edward Herring (reporting in Elizabeth's absence)

1. Charlottesville High School will hold a public performance of the musical "A Chorus Line," directed by Commissioner Murray Susen, in Besançon over the CHS Spring Break week. CHS will bring approximately 32 students. Besançon will host us as an unofficial delegation. There is talk of a more official delegation trip to Besançon in 2026.

C. Poggio a Caiano, Italy – Edward Herring (reporting in Stella's absence)

1. Official letter has been sent by Mayor Wade to the mayor of Poggio inviting him to visit after July 1, 2025.
2. Edward said that he thought the budget must be submitted to the City Council by March 1, 2025. Max said we may not need to submit a budget in March, but need to present it to the City Council in June. We can ask for an increase in June 2025, but we will not get it until FY 2026. Max said that if we want to increase our allocation for 2025, we will need to start requesting that increase now.

D. Winneba, Ghana – Kimberly Hayes

1. Kimberly said that we have made great progress with Winneba. She met with Nana Gharthey and Dave Norris. Nana put Kimberly in touch with his contacts.
2. They discussed that it would be best if Kimberly would visit independently outside of the Charlottesville Winneba Foundation visits. Kimberly is projecting an April 2025 City Rep visit. Kimberly said that she thinks we will have a strengthened relationship as a result of the visit.
3. Edward and Kimberly discussed funding her visit to Winneba with the designated city rep funds.
4. Edward said that if the Charlottesville Winneba Foundation is requesting funding, we will need to have them come visit and present their proposal.
5. Max said that in an email exchange between Kimberly and Kyna, that there is a procedural document about how funding is requested and made by City Reps. At this time, Max would not like to have a discussion about guaranteed funding for each Sister / Friendship City, as there is not yet a formal process. Edward said that we need to have a formal process outside of the commission if they have a request. Kimberly said that we need to be clear that there is protocol if an outside organization requests funding.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Budget & Finance – Edward Herring (reporting for Casey Erickson)

1. Edward reviewed the budget, pending credits, and pending expenditures.
2. Kimberly said that she is working with Darnell to get itemized receipts. If there are not itemized receipts, they will not be covered. It should be completed by the end of this week.

3. Edward said that he communicated with a company about flagpoles and that he will get an itemized receipt and submit it.

B. Grants – Kimberly Hayes

1. Grants will go live on Wednesday, December 11 once it is published in Cville Weekly. We need to submit an ad copy by Monday, December 09.
2. Kimberly said that we have \$8,000 allocated for grants.

C. Education – Alicen Brown

1. Alicen sent Edward a note to read. Last April during the Besançon mayoral delegation visit, Sylvie Schmidt (representing the department of education for Besançon and environs) presented a proposal to build a program between Besançon and Charlottesville Middle School teachers. It did not work out as well as we thought, but Walker Elementary would like to have a program. Sylvie and Alicen are currently working on a teacher exchange. The age groups are different, with the Besançon students being a bit older.
2. The 2025 Sister Cities International Young Artist and Authors Showcase competition has been announced and Alicen has provided information to fine arts, performing arts and English teachers at CHS to share with students who may be interested in participating this year.

D. Programs & Events – Sylvia New Strawn

1. Book Drive for Huehuetenango
 - a) Sylvia said her planning with the book drive is doing well. Gordon Avenue Library is the recipient of the UVA Library. The librarian said we can have anything from any book sale in Spanish. Sylvia knows a lot of Spanish scholars who will provide books.
 - b) Edward asked Sylvia if they could bring books during the Commission visit in October 2025.
 - c) We need a repository where people can drop books to donate. Sylvia suggested Food Lion on Pantops. Cherry suggested Barnes and Noble, the Library. Northside library might have a location.
 - d) Claire needs to know where the books will be placed in order to write a press release.
 - e) Max suggested Habitat for Humanity at IX Park or the Habitat for Humanity Store. Sylvia will ask Habitat for Humanity if we can place a book bin.
2. IX Farmer's Market
 - a) Commission members should email Sylvia if they would like to participate in the IX Farmer's Market event.
 - b) Once she gets a group, she will let the IX Farmer's Market leads know.
3. Adult Learner / Book Festival

- a) Cherry has been in contact with the Besancon group and asked if they are interested in finding participants. The Festival of the Book and PVCC are interested in

IX. **Closing Remarks/Adjournment** – Edward Herring

- A. Edward said for people to cc sistercities@charlottesville.gov if they are using non-government emails for Sister Cities correspondence.
- B. Max said that she just sent out a handout about parliamentary procedures. One thing she wanted to emphasize is that a quorum needs to be physically present to begin a meeting. If someone leaves and the quorum is no longer met, the meeting must end. Also, once a meeting adjourns, need to make a motion to adjourn.

Kimberly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:49 pm and Sal Moschella seconded. It was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Denton-Spalding, standing in for Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary and Besançon Representative

Next Commission Meeting:

**Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 4:30 pm at CitySpace, 100 Fifth Street NE,
Charlottesville, VA 22902**

attachments

 Strategic Plan FY25-28 - Draft.docx

**Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
MINUTES**

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

CitySpace Small Conference Room

Present: Alicen Brown, Claire Denton-Spalding, Casey Erickson, Edward Herring, Stella Mattioli (participating remotely), Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart

Absent: Sal Moschella, Murray Susen

Non-voting Members Present: Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council

The Commissioners participating remotely cited the following allowable reasons, per *FOIA Va. Code Sec. 2.2-3708 (Effective Sept 1, 2022)*:

- Stella Mattioli *(B.4) unable to attend in person due to personal travel and participating remotely from Poggio a Caiano, Italy*

Late arrivals noted: Alicen Brown 4:37; Stella Mattioli 4:59

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting opened at 4:36pm. Edward Herring presided.

- I. **Approval of Minutes** (Edward Herring)
Full Commission meeting - December 3, 2024
December minutes deferred to Feb meeting pending edits and revisions noted

- II. **Chair's Report** (Edward Herring)
Edward welcomed a visitor, Shayelle Chapman, an interested community member.

- III. **Finance Report** (Casey Erickson)
Current balance is \$21,965.94. There remain three outstanding expenditures and one pending credit. In addition, \$8K has been earmarked for Grant awards for the current 2025 Grants cycle. Once all of these are settled we will have approximately \$10K available for use for the remainder of the current FY.

Given planned sister city programs and exchanges in the next FY, Edward suggested that we reserve some of this remaining balance to take forward into FY 25-26.

Per Max, Darnell Williams has submitted his request for grant reimbursement; once it has been processed, that will officially close out the prior Grants cycle.

- IV. **Committee and City Goals for 2025-2026**

Edward has requested goals documents from each city and committee chair.

- a. Communications (Edward)
Goal: to expand Sister City promotional/publicity materials. Edward presented a spending proposal for various PR materials (**attached**) with an estimated total cost of \$1800. There was discussion of possible promotional giveaway items.

Edward requested that each commissioner making a suggestion follow through by researching that item and reporting back to the commission.

Alicen reported that her predecessor Annie Evans compiled an education traveling trunk during her tenure on the Commission, which is currently being stored at CCS. She will retrieve that trunk so that it can be stored with other CSCC materials at City Hall.

b. Education (Alicen Brown)

Goal: to systematize procedures for educational exchanges and projects in order to improve institutional memory and guarantee continuity from one K-12 Rep to the next

c. Programs (Sylvia New Strawn)

Goal: to adopt and implement the proposed IX Market program. There was a brief review and discussion of this program, which Sylvia and Elizabeth first presented in the November meeting. As a program to be administered by the Commission itself it needed to be formally adopted via vote of the members.

Motion to adopt the IX Market program as proposed: Cherry Stewart

Motion seconded: Alicen Brown

Motion passed unanimously

Goal: to adopt and implement the Huehuetenango public library book donations program. Already underway with Commission endorsement, this program also needed to be formally adopted through a vote of the members.

Motion to adopt the Huehuetenango book donations project : Claire Denton-Spalding

Motion seconded: Kimberly Hayes

Motion passed unanimously

d. Grants (Kimberly)

Goal: to implement the 2025 Grants program. The first 2025 Grants application cycle was officially opened in December, and there are currently 5 submissions. The application window for this cycle is set to close on January 15. The Grants committee will then convene to review the applications received and make recommendations to the full Commission at an upcoming meeting.

e. Cities

- Poggio (Stella)

Goal: to organize and host a Mayoral delegation from Poggio in July. The sitting Mayor of Poggio has accepted the invitation to visit and will bring one other city official. Dates have not yet been set.

- Besançon (Elizabeth)

Goals: to support the projected exchanges outlined on the summary **(attached)**; to offer more direct assistance with the Gospel Music

Exchange planned for July; to begin the planning process for a possible City/Community delegation trip to Besançon in the fall of 2026.

- Winneba (Kimberly)

Goal: to organize and complete her first City Rep visit to Winneba in April. (There was a brief discussion to distinguish between the Winneba Foundation and the CSCC Winneba program).

- Huehuetenango (Edward)

Goal: at Mayor Wade's request, to organize a mayoral visit to Huehue in October. The Guatemala Foundation (formerly the Ixtatan Foundation) and the CSCC will coordinate this trip following a division of responsibilities outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding that has not yet been drafted. Cville community members will be invited to apply to be part of the visiting delegation and to participate in the trip at their personal expense.

V. **Upcoming Programs, Activities and Costs (January 2025 - June 2026)**

It was noted that the following programs/events need to be added to the list on the January Agenda:

- Bes'Charl Creative Museum Project (elementary schools)
- Ix Farmer's Market Program

The following correction was also noted:

item g. Change Tom Tom event to Va Festival of the Book event

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Edward Herring
Meeting was adjourned at 5:46 pm.

Motion seconded: Alicen Brown

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley,
Secretary & Besançon Representative

Next Commission Meeting:

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at 4:30 pm

CitySpace, 100 Fifth Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

attachments

January 14, 2025

Spending Proposal - CSCC PR Materials

1. **Traveling Trunk** - to contain flyers, flags, PR Giveaways,
city brochures, etc. (With wheels) \$ 75.00
2. City and CSCC Color Brochures -
To be developed for each city. \$ 250 per city \$ 1000.00
3. A coffee-table type book for each city. \$ 150.00
4. Small Pop Up tent with CSCC Logo \$ 75.00
5. Five - six foot folding table and two chairs \$ 100.00
6. Giveaways - Pens, pencils, coffee holders \$ 400.00

Total \$

1800.00

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission
2025 Projected Activities and Goals
Besançon - Charlottesville

The following are projects and exchanges currently anticipated for the upcoming year. Additional activities and programs will be added as they materialize in the coming months.

Bes'Charl Creative Museum Project, January to April (in process)

A collaborative art project between 5th grade students at Walker Upper Elementary School and 5th grade equivalent students at the Ecole Primaire Helvétie in Besançon. Students will research artists, create their own interpretations of that artist's work and build a virtual art museum, the "Creative Museum" in a shared online platform to showcase their pieces. Teachers Shannon Vidoni, (Walker) and Philippe Gay, (Helvétie) will oversee the project.

Project contacts:

Alicen Brown, Charlottesville Sister City Commission K-12 Rep & Education Committee chair;
Coordinator of Social Studies & World Languages, Charlottesville City Schools
Aaron Eichorst, Fine & Performing Arts Coordinator, Charlottesville City Schools
Sylvie Schmidt and Sophie Bouaouli, Division of European Relations and International Educational Cooperation, Academy of Besançon, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region

Voices of Adult Learners/Besançon - VA Festival of the Book Event, March (proposed)

The Voices of Adult Learners is an annual Virginia Festival of the Book event, in which individuals from the literacy, GED and ESL programs share their written stories and poems about family, work, belonging, and the immigrant experience. This proposed project is to invite adult individuals who are immigrants or refugees in Besançon to submit stories and poems for inclusion in the 2025 Festival of the Book event. VoAL will provide the topic/theme for this year's event and provide guidelines for the writers. Details have yet to be worked out regarding how Besançon participants will be identified and how their stories and poems will be featured during the books festival event.

Project contacts:

Cher Stewart, Charlottesville Sister City Commission At-Large Member; Vol Coordinator, TJACE
Florent Werguet, International Relations, Ville de Besançon

CHS-Lycée Pasteur Theater Student Exchange, March 29 - April 3 (in final planning stage)

The student cast of "A Chorus Line," the CHS Spring musical, will travel to Besançon over the CCS Spring Break and will offer two performances of the musical as part of their exchange visit. The exchange will include a homestay with Lycée Pasteur student host families as well as attending and observing classes at the Lycée Pasteur. Chaperones for the trip are David Becker (CHS drama teacher), Mrs. Miller Susen (CHS parent), and Edward Herring (CSCC Chair).

Project contacts:

Edward Herring, Charlottesville Sister City Commission Chair & At-Large Member
Alicen Brown, Sister City K-12 Rep & Education Committee chair
Murray Susan, Sister City Commission Student Rep & Director of "A Chorus Line"
David Becker, CHS Drama teacher

Gospel Choir Music Exchange, July 13-19 (in planning stage)

A cooperative gospel music exchange between United Gospel community choir of Besançon, Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church of Charlottesville and University Baptist Church, Charlottesville. Approximately 50 members of United Gospel Besançon will travel to Charlottesville for 7 nights, where they will join with the choirs of the two participating Charlottesville congregations and to prepare, rehearse and perform one or more concerts for the Cville community. United Gospel choir members will be hosted in the homes of congregation members and will participate in congregational gatherings as well as possible community gatherings and local site visits during the week.

Project contacts:

Elizabeth Smiley, Charlottesville Sister City Commission Besançon Representative
Jonathan Spivey, Minister of Worship and Arts, Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church, C'ville
Megan Sharp, Minister of Music University Baptist Church, Charlottesville
Jean-Emmanuel Evrard, Director United Gospel Choir, Besançon

Submitted by

Elizabeth Smiley, Besançon Representative

January 14, 2025