

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

Tuesday June 4, 2024

City Space Small Conference Room

Present: Claire Denton-Spalding, Edward Herring, Kimberly Hayes, Stella Mattioli, Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart, Murray Susen

Absent: Alicen Brown, Casey Erickson, Nana Gharthey, Sal Moschella

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

Meeting opened at 4:33 pm. Edward Herring presided. A quorum was present.

Max requested that henceforth the Secretary note each late arrival and early departure of any Commissioners, along with the times.

I. Approval of Minutes - Commission Meeting May 7, 2024

Motion to approve with noted amendments: C. Denton-Spalding

Motion seconded: S. Mattioli

Motion passed unanimously

II. Chair's Report (Edward Herring)

Edward did not receive the reports he requested from City Reps and Committee Chairs regarding 2023-2024 accomplishments and goals for 2024-2025 so that he can incorporate these into his Annual Report to City Council. He has requested these by Friday 6/7.

Edward distributed an updated list of 2024-2025 programs and events, distributed by Claire at the May meeting (*copy attached*). This latest copy includes an additional event: staffing a Commission information table in the Community Tent at the July 4 Ceremony at Monticello. Edward plans to attend and invites other Commissioners to join if they are available that day. He intends to purchase 5 standing flag holders, using the remaining \$121.40 of the amount the Commission approved In March, which he will take to this event along with other Sister City display items for the info table.

III. Secretary's Report (Elizabeth Smiley)

Elizabeth was asked to workshop an orientation to the shared google drive during our September Retreat. Edward will also orient us to the Google photo folder he set up last month at the same time.

IV. Finance Report & 2025 Budget Approval (Max/ Edward reporting for Casey Erickson)

Current balance is **\$20,526.42**

Max reviewed the outstanding expenditures. She has received invoices from Sir Speedy that require more detailed information. Claire will review them and clarify those expenditures with Max.

Edward reviewed a second and final draft of the proposed 2024-2025 Budget. The singular change to this version is to redistribute an additional \$1000 from the City Rep travel budget to the Grants & Scholarships budget for a total allocation of \$8500.

There were questions and discussion to clarify the items and amounts. One issue for discussion was a possible visit from representatives from Poggio; we have not received a Poggio delegation since 2018. Stella reported that she has extended an invitation to the Mayor and City Council to visit next year and he has responded affirmatively. She plans to follow up with an in-person discussion when she is in Poggio this summer. Any such visit would not likely occur in the upcoming fiscal year (prior to June 30, 2025).

Motion to approve the current Proposed 2024-2025 Budget: S. New Strawn

Motion seconded: C. Denton-Spalding

Motion passed unanimously

V. Grants Program Review & Approval (Kimberly Hayes)

Kimberly distributed an updated (as of today) Grants Cycle Proposed Timeline (*copy attached*). Edward distributed a document entitled "Suggested changes to budget and repayment section of the Grant application and Contract" (*copy attached*)

Kimberly reviewed the current reimbursement status of all 2023-2024 approved Grants, as well as the working version of her revised 2024-2025 Application. The plan is to digitize the application using Jotform to create an online form.

Kimberly reviewed the proposed timeline for two (2) Grant cycles in 2024-2025. After the current fiscal year, the proposal is to establish set application deadlines of April 1 and December 1 for all future years.

Kimberly noted that new proposed guidelines for Grant application and expectations of Grantees clarify that our Grants are reimbursement-based (they are not stipends) and contain a clear procedure for the reimbursement process to ensure transparency for anyone who might wish to examine our grant program.

There was discussion about the process of approving Grants that the Grants Committee has vetted and proposed for Commission consideration. It may prove useful to have top applicants present their proposals to the full commission, either virtually or in person. Prior to launching the July 1 Grant application process Kimberly will finalize updates and revisions to the Application and guidelines, including that a prior Grantee is ineligible to apply for another Grant within 3 years of receiving a grant. There is a publicity plan in place for wider promotion of the upcoming Grant RFP relative to prior grant cycles.

Kimberly requested that any Commissioners who would like to suggest changes or additions for inclusion in the Grant Application email those to her directly as soon as

possible.

Motion to adopt the proposed 2024-2025 Grant Cycle Timeline : K.Hayes

Motion seconded: C. Stewart

Motion passed unanimously

Kimberly was asked to clarify how many Grants we expect to award and at what amounts for this upcoming Grant cycle. There was discussion about various proposed amounts. Edward suggested we consider 3 Grants of up to \$2500 and then have \$1000 to use for Travel Scholarships. Max suggested we consider earmarking one (1) of the Grants specifically for local programming, to increase the Commission's footprint in Charlottesville. This Grant could also be awarded at a lower amount.

Motion to approve 2024-2025 Grant Application with revisions to terms and reimbursement guidelines as discussed, and with the change to reflect Grant amounts of up to \$2000 each: K. Hayes

Seconded: C. Denton-Spalding

Motion passed unanimously

VI. Program Committee Update/2024-2025 Activities (Claire Denton-Spalding & Sylvia New Strawn)

Claire distributed a more detailed chart of proposed 2024-2025 programs and events incorporating input received from Commissioners following last month's meeting about high-priority events (*copy attached*). Kimberly suggested adding a Bastille Day event; Elizabeth noted the Alliance Française of Charlottesville does already sponsor a Bastille Day event each year, but that she would reach out to the AFC Director to explore the possibility of partnering in 2025 (the 2024 event will already have been planned).

VII. City Reports

a. Huehuetenango (Edward Herring)

Edward initiated conversations with both the Charlottesville and Albemarle school systems about donating used computers to the Ixtatan Foundation for distribution to the schools in Huehuetenango

b. Besançon (Elizabeth Smiley)

Elizabeth reported that Daniel Sender will be invited to our July meeting to make his presentation on his completed "Les Amities Musicales" Grant project. She has just received copies of the written report (in French) and a more detailed description with photos, which Florent Werguet submitted to Mayor Vignot following the April Besancon Delegation Visit. These will be uploaded to the shared google drive and Elizabeth will bring a complete copy to share at the July Commission meeting.

Edward reported that CHS theater students have been approved to travel to Besançon over their Spring Break (April 2025). They will stay with host families from the Lycée

Pasteur and will offer one or more performances of “A Chorus Line,” which is their musical production for the upcoming school year. The Commission’s own Murray Susan is the director of this CHS production and will be part of the exchange. David Becker, CHS Drama teacher and Edward will accompany the student delegation.

We have received a request from a middle school in greater Besançon for assistance identifying a local middle school who would be interested in becoming a partner school for possible cultural exchanges. Alicen has been made aware of the request, and Edward has agreed to courtesy contact colleagues in several of the county middle schools to facilitate a first connection if there is interest. Any partnering would be developed independently between the schools and would not be considered a CSCC program.

c. Poggio a Caiano (Stella Mattioli)

Stella reported that the “Mis-Match” Grant project has been completed, however it has been difficult to nail the Grantee down on a time to make his final presentation to the Commission, as he travels out of town often. She will see if he can come in July.

The Chamber of Commerce is planning a trip to Tuscany in March 2025 which will include a stop in Poggio. The Chamber reached out to Edward to join the trip at his own expense. Stella and Edward will meet in September to discuss plans for some kind of event in Poggio for the visitors, highlighting the Sister City relationship.

d. Winneba (Edward Herring reporting)

Nana’s commission expires on June 30 and City Council has appointed Kimberly as the new Winneba Rep. She has traveled to Ghana and is excited to take this position. She will relinquish her Business Rep position, which will be open and unfilled as of July 1.

e. Pleven (Edward Herring)

Mayor Wade received an email from staff in the Embassy regarding community interest in reactivating our Sister City relationship with Pleven. Edward has written to the American ambassador in Bulgaria to see if there appears to be clear community interest there as well before we continue any further discussions.

VIII. Other Business

Murray Susan has reapplied and if re-appointed, will serve one more year until he graduates from Charlottesville High School in June 2025.

Max reported that discussions are ongoing with the City’s IT department regarding migrating to their platforms for our media presence.

Meeting adjourned at 5:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Smiley
Secretary & Besançon Representative

Next full Commission Meeting: Tuesday, July 2 @ 4:30 pm at CitySpace

[attachments](#)

attachment

2024-2025 Sister City Events Calendar - updated 05/02/24

July 2024
1. Music festival at Boars Head 2. African American Cultural Festival 3. Farmers Market Meet and Greet 4. Fourth of July at Monticello 5. Sister Cities Cooking Classes 6. Chef Exchange / Feast Days
August 2024
1. Ghanaian recipes 2. Farmers Market Meet and Greet 3. Italian recipes 4. French recipes 5. Chamber of Commerce Collaboration 6. Pop-up Wine / Cocktails Event
September 2024
1. Partner with UVA language meet-ups 2. Photo exhibit 3. Coordinated service projects between Sister Cities 4. Cville Sabroso 5. UVA football season
October 2024
1. Global Week at UVA 2. Film festival 3. Wine festival 4. Bamff Mountain Film Festival 5. Fall fruit events 6. Literature contest 7. Friends of the Library Sale
November 2024
1. Food of Sister Cities 2. Artisans and foods market featuring Sister Cities 3. Virginia Film Festival
December 2024
1. Video call with mayors / citizens

2. Karaoke fair 3. Christmas market / holiday markets
January 2025

1. Foreign language festival 2. First Fridays
February 2025
1. Heritage month 2. Paramount season
March 2025
1. Pasta making class 2. Jefferson Theater concerts 3. Festival of the Book
April 2025
1. Dogwood Parade

attachment

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission - Grants

2024/25 Grants Cycle Proposed Timeline 1

June 2024

6/13: Announce Program
Open Applications

July 2024

7/21: Application Deadline
7/22-7/31: Grants Subcommittee reviews and deliberates on candidates

August 2024

8/6: Make recommendations to the commission on potential grantees
8/13: Announce Winners

2024/25 Grants Cycle Proposed Timeline 2

November 2024

11/1: Announce Program
Open Applications

December 2024

12/15: Application Deadline

January 2025

1/6-1/10: Grants
Subcommittee reviews and deliberates on candidates

February 2025

2/4: Make recommendations to the commission on potential grantees
2/14: Announce Winners

December 2025

Deadline to complete Project

[attachment](#)

CSCC Grants Reimbursement

June 4, 2024

Suggested changes to Budget and repayment section of the Grant Application and Contract;

Basis for Payments:

The Deliverables and the Basis / Requirements for Payments to Grantees shall be identified at the time the grant is awarded. This is part of the Grant contract: All reimbursement requests must line up with the detailed approved budget.

1. Basis A: Paid receipts for budgeted items and or expenses paid: Examples (a) sub contractors, vendors, materials, service providers. These items are reimbursement only.
2. Basis B: Paid receipts from travel and or other per diem expenses: Tickets, Meals, Hotels, other Transportation, Mileage. These items are reimbursement only.
3. Basis C: Timed activities: Creative activities - Required to be specified in the contract at an agreed upon rate and related to the completion of a specific deliverable.
4. Basis D: Product Delivery (a) Workshops (b) Presentations (C) Public or Private Performances (d) Books (e) Films, etc. Dates, times, details, locations and attendance must be documented.

[attachment](#)

2024-2025 Proposed Events List - distributed by Program Committee at June 4 meeting

#	Event	Description	CSCC should move forward with this effort	I would like to lead this effort	I would like to support this effort
1	Monthly Cultural Presentations/Discussion over Wine or Coffee	These could be arranged at local wineries or coffee shops. Sponsored by CSCC and open to the community. Each attendee will contribute a certain amount to cover wine and honorary for the guest lecturer/facilitator. Participants can also bring/purchase their own food.			
2	Harvest and Wine Festival (October)	A wine-tasting to showcase wines from our Sister Cities as part of an evening event. I feel it could be well-attended and would get us out-and-about for something "seasonal." Virginia is a wine "region," and attendees could share in the harvest of other wine regions surrounding our Sister Cities. Venue-Possibility 1: I am willing to approach Market Street Wine Shop to see if they would be interested in hosting us. This could be beneficial because they already hold regular tastings, have the venue, are centric, etc. People could also buy bottles from the shop, as they usually do at such events, so it brings a commercial benefit to them. They might host us for free/nearly free knowing that they can sell bottles of the region-specific wine. Venue-Possibility 2: I am willing to donate a selection of wines from Besancon/surrounding area, donate Ghana-based palm-wines, acquire Huehue Cab-Sauv wine barrel-aged coffee, and several bottles of Bolgheri Vermentino (Poggio) varieties a CSCC event/wine-tasting. I could reach out to venues nearby, such as Common House or C&O Gallery, to see if they'd consider hosting us there (though there would be a venue-rental fee for the Commission). I would happily host at my house, though it is in the County, and 20 mins from Downtown, so not ideal for access.			
3	Film Night	Partner with Uva/PVCC and host film night or partner with local movie theaters. Pick interesting movies and make it a CSCC			

		movie night, followed by discussion.			
4	International Cooking Classes	Partner with PVCC and/or local restaurants for international cooking classes or international food tasting. Perhaps we could partner with the Happy Cook for cooking lessons.			
5	CSCC Cooking Classes	CSCC could host 1-4 cooking days/cooking classes to showcase a main dish from each city/culture. The Intl. Center at UVA has a great/useful/large kitchen, I would be willing to reach out to them to inquire about using it. Food/materials are usually quite cheap, and the Commission could reimburse someone to pick up ingredients/lead respective cooking days. I'd be willing to lead one for Besancon. If this is a multiple day/month event, could help round out the calendar without great expenses incurred. If we want to ensure good attendance, we alternatively could invite/organize elementary trips and make the event only open to a class/grade as a school "trip."			
6	Chamber of Commerce Collaboration: Winter 24-25 sometime	Finding ways to create connections between local business, small businesses, artisans, etc. in Charlottesville and in our sister cities. This could be something as simple as a series of monthly social media posts featuring makers and businesses in each city (in similar industries or not).			
7	Festival of the Book: March 2025	There is a precedent for this: in past years, writers from our Sister Cities have been invited to participate in the festival. We'd need to reach out to the FoTB planning committee soon about their interest in featuring or showcasing authors from our Sister Cities in next year's program (if it's not already too late), and then work with our sister city contacts to find English-speaking authors who would like to attend and discuss their books. There's the issue of language-I'm not sure how this was handled in the past. Or we work with FoTB to showcase authors from our Sister Cities or to showcase travel writings/travel books/photo books about our Sister Cities.			
8	CSCC Poetry Reading	New Dominion consistently hosts lovely events; perhaps we could have a poetry reading of works from writers/regional writers from one/several Sister Cities. Perhaps something centered upon Victor Hugo (born in Besancon)? If we like the idea, I can approach/ask as to feasibility. Truly might not be everyone's cup of tea, but I think it would be a lovely way to showcase something artistic/cohesive and to bring in University students.			

9	Farmer's Market: August, September and October 2024	I have already cultivated a good working relationship with the Cville-Albemarle Visitors Bureau and they are definitely interested in making connections with our sister cities to discuss ways to promote tourism. They bring their mobile visitors booth to the market at IX at least once a month (or maybe every week?). Perhaps we could work together with them to have information about each of our Sister Cities available to distribute from their mobile booth at the Farmer's Market. This would involve each City Rep obtaining brochures, maps, tourism materials (in English as well) from their Sister City's tourism office that the Visitors Bureau would agree to display and distribute. It might involve a Commissioner(s) agreeing to attend the farmer's market to greet visitors to the booth answer questions about the sister cities.			
10	Chihamba / African-American Cultural Arts Festival	CSCC could have a presence at the Chihamba Annual Arts Festival, and have resources available to share information regarding our partnerships.			
11	State SCI Conference	Hosting the Virginia Sister Cities International conference in Charlottesville.			
12	UVA Global Week	Representing CSCC at UVA Global Week.			