

**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 Guatemaya 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

Motion seconded: Alicen Brown

Meeting was adjourned at 5:46 pm.

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