

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES

Tuesday May 6, 2025

CitySpace Small Conference Room

Present: Alicen Brown, Kimberly Hayes (participating remotely), Edward Herring, Sal Moschella, Sylvia New Strawn, Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart

Absent: Claire Denton-Spalding, Stella Mattioli, Murrey 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 \(Effective Sept 1, 2022\)*](#):

- Kimberly Hayes *(B.4) unable to attend in person due to her employer's requirement that she work two weeks each month in NYC; she attended remotely from NYC.*

Late arrivals noted: none

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting opened at pm. Edward Herring presided. A quorum was deemed present.

I. **Approval of Minutes** (Edward Herring)

Grants Committee meeting - February 12, 2025

Motion to approve minutes as presented: Sal Moschella

Motion seconded: Edward Herring

Motion carried by the Committee members present

Full Commission meeting - April 15, 2025

Motion to approve minutes as written: Sylvia New Strawn

Motion seconded: Cherry Stewart

Motion carried

II. **Chair's Report** (Edward Herring)

(see comments about Huehue trip under City Reports, below)

III. **Finance Report** (Edward Herring, for Casey Erickson)

Current balance is \$21,459,04

Edward emailed the commission an updated Budget/Spending plan for review *(attached)*

We will receive our next allocation from City Council in July; this is expected to be \$15,000. With our current projected expenses, we should still spend within our projected budget.

Max stated that the Commission has reached a point where it needs to elect a new Treasurer. In past years, officers have been elected at our annual Fall Retreat. Edward proposed that we consider moving the election of officers to our June meeting instead.

Elizabeth read the relevant By-Laws language regarding the resignation of or replacement of an officer. We will revisit this issue at our June meeting.

IV. **Committee & City Reports**

a. **Grants** (Kimberly Hayes)

2023 grantee Darnell Walker ("MisMatch Around the World") has submitted updated receipt documentation and is awaiting a final expense reimbursement

New 2025 grantees Abigail & Brian Kayser ("Disrupting the Single Story: African Stories") have not yet acknowledged final acceptance of our grant award.

b. **Education** (Alicen Brown)

CHS has approved the receipt of a student delegation from the Lycée Pasteur in Besançon in October 2025.

The Virtual Museum exchange project (Besançon) has concluded and the facilitators will submit a summary of the project soon. They have already signaled that they would like to reprise this exchange again in the next school year. Alicen had previously offered to send the commission a link to visit the Virtual Museum, and will make that available to the Commission members.

A Youth Representative from CHS has not yet been identified.

c. **Programs & Events** (Cherry Stewart, Sylvia New Strawn)

Festival of Cultures on May 24 @ the YMCA

Cherry has asked for additional 1-2 people from the Commission to volunteer to staff our info table at the Festival of Cultures. Volunteers should contact Cherry directly to sign up.

Huehuetenango library book project

Sharon Stone from the little free library has donated a selection of new Spanish books for children. Sylvia and Kelly Eplee (Guatemaya Alliance) are in discussions about the options for shipping the books. The preferred option remains using the diplomatic pouch.

Sylvia requested approval to purchase 9-10 containers in which to pack the books for shipping.

Motion: to approve an expenditure of up to \$100 to purchase containers for shipping books to Huehuetenango: Sylvia New Strawn

Motion seconded: Edward Herring

Motion carried

Ix Farmers Market CSCC Info Table

This Saturday(May 10) is our second of four 2025 Ix Market dates. Stella is the “team” leader and will be setting up the tent and information table.

d. **Outreach & Communications** (Edward for Claire Denton-Spalding)

Following up from the April meeting, Edward reported that he has researched and priced equipment for the Commission to use when setting up a display table at community events.

Motion to approve the purchase of a pop-up portable tent, a portable folding table, a banner printed with our logo, a wheeled truck to store and carry these and other display materials: Edward Herring

Motion seconded: Sal Moscella

Motion carried

There was discussion regarding the purchase of CSCC promotional giveaway items. Alicen reported that a second round of Commission polling identified several clear frontrunners.

Motion to authorize Alicen and Cherry to make final decisions on promotional items for purchase within the Commission’s allocated \$1000 budget: Edward Herring

Motion seconded: Elizabeth Smiley

Motion carried

Action item: Alicen and Cherry will consult and coordinate with Max on possible vendors and payment options.

Action item: Elizabeth will send Alicen a jpeg of our logo.

e. **Huehuetenango, Guatemala** (Edward Herring) **friendship city*

Mayoral Delegation Trip, October 2025

Edward distributed an updated proposed budget for the trip (*attached*).

Community announcements will go out at the end of May announcing that applications are open as of June 1. Community members will be eligible to apply to participate in the delegation at their own expenses. The maximum delegation size will be 15.

A thorough discussion of the planned trip will be on the agenda for the Commission’s June meeting.

f. **Besançon, France** (Elizabeth Smiley)

Elizabeth will be visiting Besançon May 26-28 and will have several meetings with exchange partners. The itinerary is still being finalized but will include a small recognition ceremony for the four Besançon "Voices of Adult Learners" story-writers; a one-on-one meeting with the new Director of Tourism to discuss promoting travel between our cities; a meeting with the United Gospel Besançon choir director to discuss the upcoming July visit; and pre-planning discussions for a possible 2026 official Mayoral/community delegation trip to Besançon in observance of the 20th anniversary of our Sister City charter.

g. **Poggio a Caiano, Italy** (Stella Mattioli)

Mayoral Visit, Summer 2025

Stella reported that the visit has been postponed to accommodate changes in the availability of the officials from Poggio. Poggio's Mayor of Poggio has indicated that a visit later in the year would be more feasible. Stella will confirm the prospect of a visit within FY 25-26 so that the funds for that visit can be reallocated if the trip is deferred until after next June.

h. **Winneba, Ghana** (Kimberly Hayes)

Kimberly reported that she continues to encounter difficulties establishing her own working relationship with contacts in Winneba. Mayor Wade, who is currently in Winneba as a member of the Winneba Foundation's May 2025 trip, has been made aware of these difficulties, and has signaled his assistance facilitating communication between the Kimberly and the officials in Winneba who oversee partnership projects there.

V. **Other Business:**

Edward has sent both Elizabeth and Max draft preliminary exit interview questions for review. These could be used as part of an exit interview with each Commissioner at the end of their term. There was discussion about the format for such an interview.

Cherry suggested that all Commissioners be given the ongoing opportunity to provide feedback and answers to questions. Edward replied that this would be a good activity for our annual Retreat.

Max noted that if the Commission decides to adopt an exit interview as a standard procedure our By-Laws will need to be amended to reflect this.

Kimberly asked if we have received any new applications for the Commission, and Max reported receiving 1 in this current application cycle.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Edward Herring

Motion seconded: Alicen Brown

Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Smiley, Secretary & Besançon Representative

Next Commission Meeting: Tuesday, June 3 4:30-6:00 pm, CitySpace

attachments

*6/3/2025

Motion to approve minutes as written: Sal Moschella

Motion seconded: Sylvia New Strawn

Motion carried unanimously