



Sister Cities Commission Meeting

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

4:30pm – 6:00pm

CitySpace, Large Conference Room

100 Fifth Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Call to Order

I. **Approval of Minutes** – Nov. 12, 2025; Jan. 6, Feb. 3, and Apr. 7, 2026

II. **Chair's Report** – Edward Herring

III. **Finance Report** – Salvatore Moschella

- Updated Spending Plan – FY26-27

IV. City Reports

- a. Huehuetenango, Guatemala – Kristen Petros de Guez
- b. Besancon, France – Elizabeth Smiley
- c. Poggio a Caiano, Italy – Stella Mattioli
- d. Winneba, Ghana – Kimberly Hayes

V. Committee Reports

- Grants – Kimberly Hayes
- Education – Alicen Brown
- Programs / Social Media & Community Outreach –
- New Committee –
 - Art-in-place
 - Bus Wrap
 - Video
 - Community gatherings

VI. Adjournment

The next Sister Cities Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 2, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. in CitySpace, Main Conference Room.

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.

Sister Cities Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 12, 2025

4:30pm – 6:00pm

CitySpace, Small Conference Room

100 Fifth Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

- **Present:** Edward Herring, Salvatore Moschella, S. Lisa Herndon, Elizabeth Smiley, Cherry Stewart, Stella Mattioli, Kristen Petros de Guex (4:43pm), John Mason (4:44pm), Kimberly Hayes (4:44pm)
- **Absent:** Bonita Patton, Alicen Brown
- **Non-Voting Members Present:** Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council

Call to Order: 4:41 p.m. Chair Edward Herring

No quorum present/ no voting until quorum is established

I. **Approval of Minutes** – October 21, 2025, quorum is established (minimum of 6 commissioners)

- Motion to approve – Discussion of Minutes
 - a. Correction - Kim Hayes noted misspelling of Edwards's name
 - b. Kim Hayes asked about the elections and the John's name being changed/S. Lisa on Winneba, Ghana Committee/Special Committee (it was noted that John was already on two programs and S. Lisa Herndon was not on one yet.
 - c. Max (Maxicelia Robinson) provided additional insight into FOIA guidelines – representative and support personnel can meet to avoid FOIA requirements
 - d. Cher (Cherry Stewart) – mentioned the proposed holiday event; she did not realize the event would coincide with the mayor's arrival. She seeks more Sister City community support and feels able to attract new supporters (Chair Edward agreed). Cher questioned why the budget seemed so high (a breakdown was provided)
 - e. Elizabeth Smiley noted that there was no attached document for the proposed holiday event included with the minutes; it was later found.
 - f. *It was noted that a correction to the previous meeting minutes would need to be made with a memorandum to minutes, correcting that the official status change for Huehuetenango had not been approved yet, the status approval will be signed at next City Council meeting (Elizabeth Smiley will make the needed corrections to the last meeting minutes)
 - g. Discussion Closed
 - h. Motion to Approve: Elizabeth Smiley
 - i. Motion was approved as presented by Chair Edward Herring

II. **Chair's Report** – Edward Herring

- 11/17 Presentation to Council – Sister City partnership with Huehuetenango, Guatemala.

- a. Chair Edward Herring passed around copies of the resolution to advance status from proposed to Sister City. Which will be presented to 6:30 sharp November 17, 2025, to City Council
- b. Kristen Petros de Guex will help with presentation to City Council (Edward asked everyone to feel free to show up if possible)
- c. It was noted that City Manager is not accepting any new budget requests and needs a 2 yr Activity Plan from Commission (each committee chair needs to create a plan)
- d. **Discussion and vote on Sister City request from Kemissie, Ethiopia:**

Sister City received a letter from Ethiopian Representative, to be considered as a Sister City. Chair Edward requested that S. Lisa provide feedback concerning the request, because she had been a part of a virtual meeting with the representative.

S. Lisa expressed that there is a UVA community of students from Ethiopia but has concerns about the lack of female representation in government and equal rights. It could be worth learning more.

- John Mason – opposed the non-democratic regime
- Chair Edward – stated that we couldn't receive the request because it needs to be a community support group making the request.
- It was agreed to leave the request and Chair Edward will write a nice letter not accepting their request

III. Finance & Budget Report – Sal Moschella

- Chair Edward will work with treasurer Chair Salvatore Moschella on budget (\$25K balance)
 - a. Sal requested to see any additional revenue or any items already earmarked
 - b. Sal needs to leave early at 5:15
 - c. Chair Edward confirmed that there were no additional questions or comments

IV. Committee Reports and Updates

- Grants – Kimberly Hayes
 1. Kim will provide an update in December next meeting, the award winner was unavailable due to a medical procedure and plans to talk with individual next week
 - a. Max (Maxicelia Robinson), asked “What’s the deadline to use the grant”.
 - b. Kim, “Awarded a year out”
 - c. Max, hopes that she (award winner) will not reject the grant
 - d. Kim noted communication concerns with the grantee
 - e. John Mason, requested information on who can apply & criteria
 - f. Kim noted information on Sister City site and on Shared Drive
- Education – Alicen Brown
 1. Cher (Cherry Stewart) & Alicen Brown, didn't have an update
- Huehuetenango, Guatemala (friendship city) – Kristen Petros de Guex
 1. Kristen & Chair Edward, very excited to collaborate with UVA Latin American Studies
 - a. There is currently no Guatemala grant to study abroad

- b. Could be a great opportunity for medical field, such as nursing students
 - c. Fundraising, positive feedback from University (UVA)
 - d. Cher sent emails to friends who taught Spanish at Lynchburg College
 - e. John Mason, shared that Anne Garden, is a great resource “don’t let her go”
 - f. Kristen, expressed GuateMaya Alliance lines getting blurred (we’re separate)
 - g. Chair Edward suggest, a student exchange, teacher swap as done with Besancon
- Besançon, France – Elizabeth Smiley
 - 1. Elizabeth, “no important updates”
 - a. Discussed a brief overview of adult learning via virtual visit to the Citadel of Besançon
 - b. Working on program in the pipeline- delegation trip to Besancon next September
 - c. Noted The City of Charlottesville, VA, officially signed a charter to become Sister Cities with Besançon, France, on October 20, 2006
 - d. Suggested that the Commission, think about hosting a delegation, a small group of city officials from Besancon in October.
 - e. Chair Edward, noted during October 2026 there will be 30 students from Monticello High School scheduled to visit the Lycee Ledoux (Besançon area)
 - f. Elizabeth, wants to know the interest level of Commissioners for participating in hosting a small delegation, more details to come such as arrangements for hotels and homestays
- Poggio a Caiano, Italy – Stella Mattioli
 - 1. Stella, noted that 2027 has symbolic importance, 50 yrs anniversary the oldest Sister Cities relationship
 - a. There is no interest from Poggio for a delegation, a very small area and doesn't have a local high school
- Winneba, Ghana – Kimberly Hayes
 - 1. Kim, noted making good progress to patch the relationship with Winneba Foundation
 - a. Plans to take a solo trip to Ghana in December, has talked with Dave Norris (Executive Director of Winneba Foundation) to make sure that everything is carved out differently than prior attempts to communicate the difference between Sister Cities and the Winneba Foundation with Ghana officials.
 - b. S. Lisa disclosed that she also works with Dave Norris on another board promoting a trip to Winneba, in summer of 2026
 - c. Chair Edward acknowledged the disclosure and noted that it shouldn’t be an issue

V. Logo Review – Alicen Brown & Cherry Stewart)

- Cher (Cherry Stewart), discussed giving ideas to city staff to create a logo that includes a globe and noted that “We were to have voted on this logo for a few meetings”
 - 1. S. Lisa mentioned that she had provided logo ideas at the retreat.
 - a. Chair Edward acknowledged receipt of the logos

- b. Max, (Maxicelia Robinson) noted that the logo issue has been going on for more than a year – need some consistency in fonts. Also noted that multiple logos can be selected. Samples of logos created by city staff was circulated and noted that they had already been approved by the city
- c. Chair Edward likes simplicity of the logos created by city staff
- d. John Mason, noted that the city staff logos had already been approved, which makes them easier to choose
- e. Elizabeth Smiley, noted not selecting one of the city staff logos could take longer, but not to disregard the other logos, presented by S. Lisa
- f. Chair Edward, proposed choosing the simpler logo created by city staff (unanimously agreed upon) and the possibility of revising the others at later date

VI. City Representatives Planning Session (5:40PM)

- Chair Edward, city representatives need to start writing out their plan two-year plans
 1. Program Committee – work on holiday ideas in a program packet, they will make final decision on what will happen
 - a. Cher Program Committee Chair also suggested the need to set a budget on how much to spend and stated that Bonita Patton (not in attendance) is the Co-Chair. Cher shared some challenges with the planning and others offered to help (Kristen Petros de Guex)
 - b. Cher wants to postpone the event until the new year to highlight the Sister Cities
 - c. Chair Edward will talk with city representatives about Huehuetenango and spending plans for a two-year budget.
 - d. **Members broke out into multiple committee brainstorming sessions**
 - e. Chair Edward, calls everyone back (5:54PM) think about program ideas and budget
 - f. Kristen & Kim (Kimberly Hayes) support a partnership with GuateMaya Alliance
 - g. Chair Edward, reiterated each city representative needs to provide a plan by December's meeting
 - h. Kim asked if there was a particular budget
 - i. Chair Edward suggested each event should be no more than \$2,200
 - j. Cher (Cherry Stewart) questioned whether there was a swag budget – should we charge \$5 for T-shirts? (Building Goodness Foundation was mentioned as a possible meeting/event space)
 - k. Chair Edward, each committee needs to make a budget recommendation
 - l. Elizabeth Smiley asked if city representatives should include travel costs in their budget.
 - m. Chair Edward, answered yes, \$3,000 for travel, roll these plans into a budget and a strategic plan completed by January, two-year plan by December, we need activities for people who want to give to our mission
 - n. Chair Edward, will email everyone eight pages for grant and city sister representatives (Chair liked the brainstorming sessions)

- o. Cher asked if Co-Chairs can also get travel support
- p. Elizabeth noted that it's a good idea to include Co-Chair especially if they plan to become Chair next year (it was noted as a good idea)
- q. Max – reiterated that City Council makes the appointments to the Sister Cities Commission

VII. Adjournment – by Chair at 6:05PM

Submitted by,
S. Lisa Herndon, Secretary

DRAFT

Sister Cities Commission Meeting
Tuesday, January 6, 2026
4:30pm – 6:00pm
CitySpace, Main Conference Room
100 Fifth Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

- **Present:** Edward Herring, S. Lisa Herndon, Elizabeth Smiley, Bonita Patton, Kristen Petros de Guex, John Mason, Kim (Kimberly Hayes), Stella Mattioli
- **Absent:** Cher (Cherry Stewart), Alicen Brown
- **Zoom/Virtual:** Salvatore Moschella (Member cited FOIA Va. Code § 2.2-3708(B)(4) exemption for participating remotely because he is unable to attend in person as he is in France on holiday.)
- **Non-Voting Members Present:** Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council

Call to Order 4:35 p.m. Chair Edward Herring - quorum is established

I. Approval of Minutes – November 12 regular meeting; November 12 Program Committee meeting (delayed until guest Dave Norris’s presentation)

II. Chair’s Report – Edward Herring

- Kristen Petros de Guex, the city officially approved her as Huehuetenango's representative
 - a. Chair Edward & Kristen both attended City Council meeting
 - b. Chair Edward, will meet with Major Wade, Major request visit to Poggio, Chair note “we will move forward planning a visit”
 - c. Max (Maxicelia Robinson), mentioned that a letter was sent to Huehuetenango to visit (major) sent to inform their major

III. Winneba Foundation – Dave Norris

- Chair Edward, acknowledged special guest attending the meeting, Dave Norris
 - a. Dave Norris (Executive Director of Winneba Foundation), provided history of Foundation & Sister Cities – relationship- stated that the Commission should have a non-profit (All Sister Cities should have a non-profit foundation)
 - b. Dave discussed a big project in May, provided a handout detailing an upcoming trip to Ghana, also discussed a donation of a retired fire engine and ambulance to Ghana
 - c. Also discussed understanding the difference between Commission vs. Foundation
 - d. **Questions:** John Mason, asked how they encourage the Sister Cities to be open to the non-profit entity and what’s in it for the Sister Cities – discussed the value of a lot of individual & private donors
 - e. Elizabeth Smiley, asked Dave what does he see as the relationship between SCC and the Foundation?
 - f. Answer: Kim would work with the city and city representatives, and Dave would work more with the community
 - g. Elizabeth Smiley, follow up question – Do we see collaboration on topics between Commission and Foundation? Yes

IV. Reports and Updates

- Winneba, Ghana – Kimberly Hayes
 - a. Kim asked Chair Edward- could she provide her Commission update earlier than noted in the agenda. Yes
 - b. Kim explained how Dave helped her with an agenda prior to her visit the right Winneba representatives. She also noted that Dave has agreed to attend our meetings once a month as his schedule allows
 - c. Chair Edward, spoke positively about the collaboration, we need to do better job of getting Charlottesville citizens involved
 - d. Kim’s plan is to elevate both committees bringing light to the work to support Winneba
- Grants Committee – Kimberly Hayes
 - a. It was noted that the grantee from last year will be doing a project in Winneba, Kim noted the grantee was working on a survey and putting together a book for Winneba & one for Charlottesville as well. She plans to have more details next meeting on the grantee's plans
 - b. Next grant application will go out in February (project grants vs. travel grants)
 - c. Kristen - asked Kim if there was a proposal that application go out to community
 - d. Applications must be attached to one of the City’s Sister Cities – wants it to benefit both cities local and abroad – the project must benefit both
 - e. Max – asked is there a list of reimbursable expenses to help provide clarity –limits any confusion
 - f. Kristen – follow up question – is there a maximum amount – historically it has depended upon up to \$3K, last year it was up to \$8K per Chair Edward
 - g. Chair Edward - \$15K for four cities budget, during Covid it was \$45K now \$7,500K new maximum, no more than half our budget, most projects last year were for Winneba projects
 - h. John Mason, asked how we get the word out about the grants (social media, TV City press release)

V. Two-year Activity Plan – City representatives

- Kim’s two-year plan – provided a few copies of her handout
 - a. Kim will email a copy of her plan to the group (SCC)
 - b. Chair Edward noted that everyone’s plans are a work in progress
 - c. Elizabeth, asked if there are any items on Kim’s plan already in place – Kim stated no
 - d. Max – suggested hiring a videographer to record many of the events – could be used to promote and possibly enter into the Virginia Film Festival
 - e. Chair Edward spoke of possibly already having a video that was already purchased
 - f. John – spoke about Besançon cities social media, “Game is great” impressed by their platform in comparison to what we should also be doing
 - g. Chair Edward, suggest putting together a project team around creating a video to support Sister Cities – this will be on next month’s agenda to discuss

- h. John volunteered to help with the project and make connections with directors in the film festival
- i. Kristen – mentioned a local resource, Light House Studios
- j. Copies of Kimberly Hayes plan will be emailed to the entire group

5:23 PM Dave Norris leaves the meeting

Chair Edward noted that **November 12th minutes** will be provided at next meeting

- Huehuetenango, Guatemala - Kristen Petros de Guex
 - a. Stella Mattioli & Kristen Petros de Guex to review previous November 12th Program meeting: Kristen made motion and Stella seconded
 - b. Chair Edward, asked if there were any questions about Huehuetenango plan
 - c. John – asked Kristen to provide a summary of her ideas for Huehuetenango
 - d. Kristen – discussed community involvement, \$5k to get books delivered to Huehuetenango (the Commission was asked to provide \$1,500 toward the cost of having the books delivered), total cost for book delivery \$4,900 and \$2,000 from friends (former member Silvia Newston, made the request of \$1,500 from SCC) friends
 - e. Chair Edward, made motion that SCC make \$1,500 payment to vendor –reimbursement for paying transportation of the books –must be an approved city vendor
 - f. There was a previous request to have American Embassy pay – but they needed biography for each book – to ensure it didn't include DEI or particular language in the books (Cataloging the books)
 - g. Group discussed the many obstacles – and how to avoid but want to help with the books
 - h. Elizabeth – asked should we wait until the city gives us approval to move forward
 - i. The motion to support the effort was approved by SCC –pending city approval
 - j. Chair Edward, noted SCC voted unanimously to approved
 - k. Kristen – motion to approve up to \$500 for community dinner (SCC voted unanimously to approve)
 - l. Location – maybe host in Southwood Church to avoid ICE,
 - m. Other ideas discussed: receive the major in May to visit, virtual student exchange, indigenous people exchange (to include Monacan Nation), see Kristen's attached summary (included)
 - n. Chair Edward, excited about Kim's and Kristen's plan – wants to see how they can both collaborate and partner up
 - o. Maxicelia Robinson –noted that Kristen will provide a date to advertise through the city site
- Besancon, France – Elizabeth Smiley
 - a. Elizabeth has 8 projects; many are already in the pipeline or actively committed. She detailed some of the projects and asked to provide a copy of plan
 - b. Plan will be attachment with future meeting minutes
 - c. Biggest budget item – anniversary, Sept. 2026 delegation (community's first since 2018)
 - d. Oct. or Nov. 2026 –small delegation request – not yet responded

- e. Max, asked if Elizabeth thinks that younger students would be interested in taking the virtual Citadel tour. Elizabeth noted that it's 1-2 hours long-- a concern about their attention span & the challenge to collect permission slips -- not sure if it can be recorded. Chair Edward asked that she chat with Alicen Brown as well
- Poggio a Caiano, Italy – Stella Mattioli
 - a. Stella, 2027 50 anniversary of the established relationship
 - b. Possible visit from major – still up in the air, Stella will visit Poggio in the summer, there is no high school in the area, but she wants to locate and visit a school
 - c. Stella mentioned an email from Daniel Sanders concerning applying for grant-- he is a former grantee for Poggio, not sure if he's eligible. Kim Hayes – said send him her way
 - d. Chair Edward noted that Sanders had previously promised to do something musical
 - e. Chair Edward asked that Stella put her plan in a written format

VI. Budget Report – Sal Moschella

- Chair Edward acknowledged that he had not been able to get with Sal
 - a. Noted \$25,551 remaining budget
 - b. Sal will work together for a proposed two-year budget
 - c. Paid Sister Cities membership for a year
 - d. All Committee's two-year plan will be rolled into the budget
- Chair Edward thanked everyone for their two-year plan
 - a. No report from Cher (Cherry Stewart), Alicen Brown - Excused Absence
 - b. Request: to delay City report until February
 - c. Max, noted City Commission has 2 vacancies
 - d. (Youth seat and Business representative seat)
 - e. Deadline February 1st will be advertised on City Council website
 - f. City Council will make decision at second meeting in February (round of appointments)

VII. Adjournment

- Chair Edward asked for motion to adjourn
 - a. Motion made by Elizabeth Smiley and second by Kimberly Hayes
 - b. Meeting adjourned 6:03

Submitted by,

S. Lisa Herndon, Secretary

Sister Cities Commission Meeting
Tuesday, February 3, 2026
4:30pm – 6:00pm
CitySpace, Main Conference Room
100 Fifth Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

- **Present:** Edward Herring, S. Lisa Herndon, Bonita Patton, Elizabeth Smiley, Kimberly Hayes, John Mason, Stella Mattioli, Salvatore Moschella, Kristen Petros de Guex, (Alicen Brown arrived 5:08pm)
- **Virtual Attendance:** Cherry Stewart (Member cited FOIA Va. Code § 2.2-3708(B)(4) exemption for participating remotely from work at PVCC.)
- **Non-Voting Members Present:** Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council

Call to Order: 4:43 P.M. Chair Edward Herring - quorum is established

I. Approval of Minutes

- Minutes will be reviewed on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, meeting

II. Chair's Report – Edward Herring

- Updates and increasing Sister Cities visibility in the community
 - a. All individual budget reports will be rolled into one big plan
 - The budget is limited - so choices will need to be made as related to our mission
 - b. Publicity ideas – video products, suggest a shoot for our citizens or a larger video from us including all Sister Cities, (allowing an introduction to the community), request for volunteers to help Chair this committee – John Mason agreed to help
 - June 30, 2026, Deadline for Virginia Film Festival – the idea is to create a video to highlight our Sister Cities Commission (Kimberly Hayes agreed to Chair John Mason and S. Lisa Herndon agreed to help)
 - Chair Edward Herring - suggest monthly exposure to the Commission via TV10 a free channel, and Cville Weekly, John Mason also suggested, Edward's Corner to provide consistent updates. Additional suggestions: 3-year bus wrap, have a competition to sponsor a mural to select winning drawing, high school students from Sister Cities this can be viewed as a project for the students
 - c. Reminder Feb. 20th - Huehuetenango community meeting – all encouraged to attend
 - d. Chair Edward Herring - wants to work on these ideas:
 - Artwork Project – they are the primary communications for the Sister Cities (the bus wrap cost \$5-\$10K but only last 2-3yrs too expensive)
 - Wall art – a mural would last longer
 - 4 City Representatives will make these projects happen/these are the items to kick off the New Year
 - e. April – each committee will report their findings around these ideas, and the Commission will vote on the different ideas

- f. Chair Edward noted – we didn't spend what was expected in 2025 but of the \$25K balance Kimberly Hayes still needs to attend Ghana, 2026 Commission will get another allocation – it has continued to rollover each year

III. Two-Year Budget – Salvatore Moschella & Edward Herring

- Sal & Chair Edward – reviewed each City Representatives two years budget plan
 - a. Not all items will be funded due to limited resources - an Excell budget spreadsheet was displayed and handouts provided, noting funds that have been earmarked by quarters
 - Elizabeth Smiley – noted that Besancon wasn't on the spreadsheet \$9,200, Sal noted that the spreadsheet included figures for “sure” numbers
 - Chair Edward noted – today's presentation is for seeing the form to see what we're working with – they will re-visit the specific forms submitted by the City Representatives for specific line items
 - Sal - emphasized again that not all projects will be funded
 - Cher (Cherry Stewart) - questioned the discrepancy between Cities
 - Chair Edward – noted these are wish list
 - Cher (Cherry Stewart) - asked about travel expenses for the representatives
 - Chair Edward – noted funds are set aside every three years and the next meeting will include spending for each representative
 - Sal – noted this is a fluid document
 - John – asked Sal to share the Excell file, because the screen display was too small to read – Sal will add to the shared drive
 - Chair Edward – noted going forward there will be spending categories such as Spend, Committed, or Planned (helps determine if fund raising is necessary)

IV. City Reports

- Huehuetenango, Guatemala – Kristen Petros de Guez- discussed community event kick off
 - a. February 20th Big Huehue Event – Kristen & Edward checked out the space
 - 25 confirmed RSVP, 7 maybes, request \$532.65, \$750 already approved budget
 - Latinx outreach as well as many members agreed to post event on social media, local libraries and Blue Sky
 - SirSpeedy –produced the flyer
 - Guatemala Alliance will help to promote, 6-8:00 PM
 - Chair Edward working with Cville Weekly to do a free ad – no cost
 - b. Kristen – update on Huehuetenango Major's visit- Major believes it would be better to come later maybe in July- stay tuned for exact date, Kristen is also speaking with a band to add to the mayor's visit event
 - Chair Edward – the cultural event makes it more than one event helps bring the citizens of Charlottesville along, an event driven by the community

- Chair Edward – will email a recap of each committee’s ideas, such as the mural project as a student drawing contest

Besancon, France – Elizabeth Smiley

- a. Besancon Mayor has sent letter of congratulations to Major Wade for his re-election
- b. She attended Sister Cities International France virtual Roundtable virtual meeting on January 30 and will compile notes to share
 - In the process of planning two events – virtual Citadel tour, she mentioned during last meeting, one at the Center at Belvedere in English & one at the Alliance Francaise in French
 - Suggest SCC offer to pay for refreshments if neither of the sponsoring organizations has a budget for refreshments
 - Besancon is offering the tour to us free of charge
 - Chair Edward – ask for a motion to fund up to \$300 for refreshments
 - Elizabeth, made motion that the Commission approve \$300 for two Besancon tours
(who seconded the motion? Also, can you note that the motion passed?)

Poggio a Caiano, Italy – Stella Mattioli

- a. 2027 Visit – continuing conversations - Poggio major willing to help with home stays, Stella will work on a community gathering for the fall, a representative trip to Poggio, hold \$2,500 contingency plan for major to travel to Charlottesville

Winneba, Ghana – Kimberly Hayes

- a. Representative travel in March to Winneba, Dave Norris helped with itinerary for the week, \$2,500 funds have already been approved for the trip
 - Chair Edward –noted that you can’t take money from previous budget to the current year – so need to re-do the motion- Kim made motion and second by John Mason (approved from current budget cycle)
 - Last year - Abbagale Kyser – Virginia Festival of the Book (Winneba & Charlottesville) projected book in June
 - New Grant Program/application - more tailored language, change from quarterly to monthly, meeting with awardee, flyers created to announce grant
 - Kimberly – welcomes volunteers and reviewers of the application
 - John Mason – volunteered to help review applications
 - Chair Edward – suggest making applications available March 2nd deadline, 30 days for everyone to apply
 - John – asked will there be a media release
 - Kristen Petros de Guez – asked is this for projects only in the U.S.?
 - Kimberly - No, must be Charlottesville applicant only
 - Chair Edward – wants to step away from travel grants more project based

- Kimberly – applications from other areas were considered, but want to keep to Charlottesville, March 2nd at 5:00 P.M. is deadline, committee will review and announce at Commission’s next meeting March 3rd, so commissioners can participate

Education – Alicen Brown

- a. Besancon – closing program until next year because city school has low participation, Charlottesville High School (CHS) is planning to travel next year – an on going exchange every other year – during History Day & Spring Break
 - New teachers – Alicen wants teachers to be able to charge for creating the curriculums, still learning what to pay teachers for their work.
 - Student representatives – multiple students applied, 11 students and 1 adult – application closed February 1st
 - Chair Edward – acknowledged that he has reviewed applications in the past and made recommendation to City Council
 - Alicen – really wants to have the teachers review applications -set up a diplomatic and process driven way to review applications – will talk with teachers

Programs & Events – Cherry Stewart

- a. Cher (Cherry Stewart) - attending virtually – teaching a class that starts at 6:00 PM and will need to go – need to leave by 6:06 PM – she will talk with Kristen Petros de Guex

V. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn (Kimberly & Chair Edward) at 6:06 PM

The next Sister Cities Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. in CitySpace, Main Conference Room.

Submitted by,
S. Lisa Herndon, Secretary

Sister Cities Commission Meeting
Tuesday, April 7, 2026
4:30pm – 6:00pm
CitySpace, Main Conference Room
100 Fifth Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

- **Present:** Edward Herring, S. Lisa Herndon, Bonita Patton, Elizabeth Smiley, Stella Mattioli, Salvatore Moschella, Kristen Petros de Guex
- **Virtual Attendance:** Kimberly Hayes (B.4 unable to attend due to her employer's requirement that she work out of the area this week, participating remotely from New York City)
- **Absent:** Cherry Stewart, Alicen Brown, John Mason,
- **Non-Voting Members Present:** Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council

Call to Order: 4:39 P.M. Chair Edward Herring - quorum is established

I. Approval of Minutes

- Past meeting minutes will be reviewed in May 2026, (for November, January and February awaiting Elizabeth's edits). March and April will also be reviewed at that time.

II. Chair's Report – Edward Herring

- Updates on - Besancon, France
 - Past Mayor of Besancon, Jean-Louis Fousseret has visited Charlottesville in the past, and helped with activities
 - Newly elected Mayor Ludovic Fagaut, will serve for five years
 - a. Socialist to conservative government not sure how this will impact their involvement because of budget
 - Events – April 12th Annual Monticello wreath laying ceremony, the CSCC has been invited to participate for the 3rd year –\$125.00 cost to purchase a wreath, includes a 1:30 P.M. luncheon – Mayor Wade will also be in attendance
 - a. The ceremony is to lay a wreath at the tomb of Thomas Jefferson to celebrate his birthday
 - b. July 4th Commission will be at Monticello as a community partner
- Chair Edward Herring – made a motion to purchase the \$125.00 to participate in the wreath laying celebration
 - a. S. Lisa Herndon – Asked if there had ever been any controversy around being at the ceremony
 - b. Chair Edward Herring - provided his perspective and his history of working with Monticello and students – stated that he would feel reluctant to cancel at this point

- c. Sal Moschella – shared that he feels that the Monticello Foundation does a lot of good
- d. S. Lisa Herndon – shared her perspective and opposition to participating in the ceremony and would abstain from voting
- e. Kristen Petros de Guex - shared her perspective and opposition to participating in the celebration and would also abstain from voting
- f. Max (Maxicelia Robinson) - noted that the motion had not been seconded
- g. Chair Edward – requested a 2nd to the motion – it was not seconded and was not able to move forward

III. Finance Report – Salvatore Moschella

- Updated FY26-27 Spending Plan
 - a. Sal reviewed the 2 –Year Budget (as of 4/7/2026) provided handouts – highlighting the best estimates based on funds already spent, and those earmarked
 - b. \$24,022.68 balance based on projected expenditures
 - c. Finance Budget Committee will re-evaluate
 - d. Reference the **Charlottesville Sisters Cities Commission 2 – Year BUDGET (as of 4/7/2026)** handouts as presented during the meeting

IV. City Reports

- a. Huehuetenango, Guatemala – Kristen Petros de Guez
 - Provided the **Budget Request: Huehuetenango Committee – Major Cano Delegation Visit, July 2-5, 2026**, handout
 - Discussed the 19-visitors – not all are a part of the official delegation from Huehuetenango, Guatemala – Mayor Wade has agreed to help tour with the visiting delegation
 - Budget – will cover MOU signing ceremony, art reception (Jefferson School African American Heritage Center/JSAAHC), visit the Monacan Ancestral Museum, and July 4th picnic and farewell dinner with live music by the Lua Project – additional interactive suggestions were discussed, and the farewell dinner will be co-hosted with the GuateMaya Alliance - departing on July 6th
 - May 10, 2026 – final details should be complete for visit
 - Kristen needs to start confirming event commitments, transportation is only budgeted for Monacan Museum trip to Amherst – all travel and housing is the delegation responsibility – willing to assist – encourage them to stay in the city
 - Chair Edward – suggest that we plan a quick trip – such as a visit to

PVCC

- Elizabeth Smiley – suggested having host families for housing the delegation (idea was well received)
- Motion to approve \$6,088 budget for the Mayor Cano Delegation Visit July 2-5, 2026
- S. Lisa Herndon – suggested amending the motion to fund up to \$6,088
- Bonita Patton – Seconded the motion and the amendment was approved

b. Besancon, France – Elizabeth Smiley

- Elizabeth – shared that Florent Werguet (International Relations Director for Besancon) had visited for 2 weeks to celebrate French learners participating in the Virginia Festival of the Book
- Discussed a delegation to Besancon in September if approved by the new government (Mayor Ludovic Fagaut & Florent Werguet will have conversations about how the Sister Cities will move forward)
- Elizabeth - suggest waiting until 2027 to send our delegation to Besancon – the new mayor wants more economic benefits – strengthening our mutual business

connections, she will get more information on the number of delegation members to travel

- Elizabeth - noted that she will not be coordinating travel arrangements unlike to coordination of the Huehuetenango, Guatemala trip
- Each individual traveler will be responsible for making their own trip itinerary
- Update - virtual Citadel tour – members were invited to do the Citadel of Besancon virtual tour as noted in previous meeting minutes (the city of Besancon owns and manages the Citadel) - the tour was offered in French & English

c. Poggio a Caiano, Italy – Stella Mattioli

- Stella plans to visit Italy at the end of May 2026
- The goal is to have a group visit to Italy in July 2027

d. Winneba, Ghana – Kimberly Hayes

- Kimberly – shared her recent Winneba visit which she found to be very hospitable and included a robust itinerary (meeting multiple officials: Deputy Chief, Fire Chief, Director of Schools, etc.)
- Viewed the donated fire engine & ambulance, as well as donating items to the school, and took lots of videos
- Nana Akyeampong-Ghartey – was very helpful reinforcing &

clarifying that Kimberly is the city representative which is sometimes confused with the Winneba Foundation representative

- Chair Edward – asked if there are any grant applications? Also noted that Cville Weekly – offers a reduced City advertising rate of \$125 – suggested running an ad sharing the grant application April 30th deadline
- Kimberly – will work with Cher (Cherry Stewart) concerning the grants
- Motion: made by Kimberly to provide funds of \$200 to advertise in Cville Weekly, and seconded by Elizabeth Smiley

V. Committee Reports

- a. Grants – Kimberly Hayes (update included in her City Report)
- b. Education & Outreach – Alicen Brown
 - Alicen Brown & Cher to provide an update on T-shirts & pin purchase requisition recommendations (both were absent)
- c. Programs / Social Media & Community Outreach - Cherry Stewart
 - (Cher on vacation)

Chair Edward - announced that we're ***out of time will continue at the next meeting***

- d. New Art & Content Committee – continue update at the next meeting
 - Art-in-place
 - Bus Wrap
 - Video
 - Community Gatherings

VI. Adjournment – Chair Edward 6:05 P.M. next meeting May 5, 2026, at 4:30 P.M. in CitySpace (S. Lisa Herndon – secretary will be absent on Winneba, Ghana trip)

Respectfully submitted,
S. Lisa Herndon, Secretary