



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

ALD. RUSSELL W. STAMPER, II, CHAIR

**Colleen Cheney-Trawinski, Al Durtka, Adamaris Penaloza and
Aaron Szopinski**

**Staff Assistant, Chris Lee, 286-2232, Fax: 286-3456,
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Thursday, July 25, 2024

10:00 AM

Room 301-A, City Hall

This is also a virtual meeting conducted via GoToMeeting. Should you wish to join this meeting from your phone, tablet, or computer you may go to <https://meet.goto.com/334324125>. You can also dial in using your phone United States: +1 (872) 240-3311 and Access Code: 334-324-125.

1. Call to order.

Meeting called to order at 10 a.m.

2. Roll call.

Present 4 - Durtka, Stamper, Cheney-Trawinski, Penaloza

Excused 1 - Szopinski

Also present:

*Anya Verkhovskaya, Friends of Be An Angel, Inc.
Boris Nayflish, Friends of Be An Angel, Inc.
Dr. Christine Mosore, Mosorec International Foundation, Inc.
Dr. Nevenka Bralic, Federation of Croatian Societies Inc. of Milwaukee
Dr. Dele Ojelabi, Milwaukee Action Network
Stefan Dostanic, St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral
Deborah Moore, City Clerk's Office
Jackie Carter, Port Milwaukee Director
Rick Meyers, DPW-Sanitation Manager
A/C Schuyler Belott, Fire Dept.*

3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from March 21, 2024.

Meeting minutes from March 21, 2024 were approved without objection.

4. Review and/or approval of sister city relationship annual reports.

a. Irpin, Ukraine

i. 2024 annual report (due 6/15/24)

Ms. Verkhovskaya presented on a detailed annual report of Friends of Be An Angel, Inc. activities from April 2022 to September 2023. The report summarized their major programs, operations, and networking. Primary focus has been providing aide and resources to Ukraine and Ukrainians. They have helped evacuate, relocate, and provide treatment to Ukrainian children to the United States and provided 3 medical flights to critically injured patients. Their warehouse has collected and will be sending over wireless technology and first responder equipment and supplies to Irpin and Ukraine. These materials will help with shelters, hospitals, and bomb shelters in Irpin. Their work has been recognized. There has been \$62 million in humanitarian aide. They will work with Milwaukee organizations to provide heat and power generators to Irpin and Ukraine. They will process to bring 3 more children to Milwaukee. They are collaborating with Mayor Johnson to provide trauma education for children in Irpin suffering from the war. There have been tremendous donations and financials set up for their operations. Future goals include maintaining humanitarian aide operations, focusing on rescue efforts, expanding the rare disease program, launching a mental health pilot program, and advocating through the sister city relationship.

Member Durtka requested that further information be given specifically on activities between the cities. Despite the great information on broad activities of the organization being shared, there was little to no information regarding how the sister city relationship at the city level was progressing.

Ms. Verkhovskaya added that the organization was based in Milwaukee, she was the founder, the report was on national efforts, and she can narrow information down to focus on what Milwaukee was doing. They can compile information on the local hospital treatment of children in Milwaukee, relocation and treatment of children and their families to Milwaukee, and the gathering and shipping of wireless technology and first responder supplies and equipment from Milwaukee.

Mr. Nayflish added that he was appreciative of all the help given by Milwaukee and everyone, the report covered the nonprofit operations as a whole, and military gear was sent to Irpin and Ukraine through Milwaukee directly.

Member Durtka moved to hold review of the annual report and for an amended annual report to be submitted to detail activities between the cities at the city level. Member Cheney-Trawinski seconded. There was no objection.

5. Discussion, review, and/or motion(s) relating to revision of the annual report form and addition of a questionnaire.

Mr. Lee said that the committee discussed previously wanting to have consistency with annual reporting from the sister cities, especially with tracking the progress of each sister city relationship. He developed a draft questionnaire to go along with the annual report form. Members were given the questionnaire to review and to provide feedback.

Member Durtka said that he wanted the questionnaire to be condensed; to add verbiage directing that only new information (as opposed to old past information) be shared on the previous year and current year activities and well as next year's goals; and for measurable and quantifiable data on activities to be shared. The questionnaire seemed to ask for generalities in nature, which was not helpful in analyzing the process of a sister city relationship.

Members discussed that the questionnaire draft did have language requesting for measurable outcomes but can be improved upon to ask for more precise information.

Mr. Lee said he will work with members offline to make revisions to the draft as suggested today.

Dr. Mosore said that the questionnaire draft should be held and reviewed again at a next meeting in September.

Chair Ald. Stamper concurred.

6. Discussion, review, update(s), and/or motion(s) relating to current and prospective sister city relationships with regards to their establishment, status, activities, or termination.

a. Tema, Ghana

- i. Local sponsorship*
- ii. Signing ceremony*
- iii. Termination*

No one from the local sponsoring organization, Ghana Milwaukee Association, Inc., was present.

Mr. Lee said that the committee asked for the local sponsorship to report on its commitment to establish the sister city relationship. The relationship was at its last step in requiring a signed agreement between the cities. The local sponsorship has not been responsive for about a year in spearheading an agreement signing and communicating on their efforts and commitment. Local representatives have appeared once or twice at previous meetings virtually but failed to speak at the meeting and failed to respond to any inquiries and communications made offline.

Members discussed to give the local sponsorship one more opportunity to report to the committee with notice that the next meeting in September be the deadline for a response or risk the committee taking adverse action to recommend termination of the relationship.

b. Abuja, Nigeria

- i. Status update on activities*
- ii. Exchange opportunities with City agencies*

Dr. Ojelabi gave an update. They were working on 3 activity goals for the year relating to culture/education, economic development, and humanitarian exchanges. There is a signed MoU with MATC for student exchange between the cities with efforts underway for funding and scholarships. They were also engaging UW-Milwaukee, which also has interest. There was discussions with WEDC to compile interested businesses to embark on a trade mission visit to Abuja and Nigeria. Donated hospital supplies and equipment were acquired to send to Abuja. They were looking for funding to help ship those supplies. Further email will be sent regarding further assistance needed regarding activities of the relationship.

Mr. Lee said that a few City agencies (Port Milwaukee, Fire Dept., and Dept. of Public Works-Sanitation) were present to respond to inquires made by Dr. Ojelabi.

Director Carter presented. There was opportunity for port activities between Milwaukee and Africa with current exchange activities between the countries at only 4%. Establishing further port trade would be challenging with both cities being more inland. Several aspects would need to be explored and defined. Examples include

identifying commodities, trade routes, lowering costs, competing routes, and supply chain solutions. She would like to discuss further offline with Dr. Ojelabi.

Manager Meyers said that Dr. Ojelabi can connect with him offline (staff to provide his contact) regarding the interest in waste management.

A/C Belott said that retired firefighting protective gear typically are items that may be available for donation.

Chair Ald. Stamper said that further engagement with City agencies continue offline.

c. Kragujevac, Serbia

i. Status update on activities

Mr. Dostanic gave an update. Current relationship exchange activities were focused on economic development, culture, and education. Those companies who were a part of the itinerary for the Kragujevac delegation's visit during the sister city relationship signing ceremony were being engaged further. A listing of those businesses can be shared (as requested by member Cheney-Trawinski). They were tightening their by-laws and working committee. A counter-signing visit and ceremony in Kragujevac was customary, and they were planning for Milwaukee officials to go there. They will hold a booth at Serbian Days event this August 23-25.

d. Tarime District, Tanzania Dr. Christine Mosore

*i. Mosorec International Global Experience: 2024 Summer
Student Exchange Program-Tanzania, East Africa*

Dr. Mosore gave an update. She was organizing a student exchange trip to Tarime and Tanzania this August with 13 total people (5 adults and 8 high school students) traveling. Sponsorship and funding was acquired for this trip, and she was seeking further funding support. They will be purchasing and/or bringing food, school, and medical supplies there in Tarime to assist the community there. A standard t-shirt will be created for all the travelers to wear to cohesively represent themselves as one group.

Members questioned the manner of selecting students for the trip.

Dr. Mosore replied that Milwaukee Public Schools and other student-based organizations were engaged.

Members requested that further information regarding the selection process and asked for additional needs be forwarded to members.

Dr. Mosore replied that she will resend that information, which was sent previously.

e. South Africa

Mr. Lee said that the committee wanted to entertain, as previously discussed in the past, establishing a sister city relationship with a city in South Africa to carry on the momentum from the SCI Africa Summit during February 2023 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Dr. Ojelabi said he will engage with a possible local South African group to gauge their interest to spearhead a relationship.

Dr. Mosore said that an interested community organization needs to be identified.

Chair Ald. Stamper asked Dr. Ojelabi to further work with him on identifying an interested organization and said that youth group initiatives and exchanges were goals from the summit.

f. Other

There was no other discussion.

7. Discussion, review, update(s), or motion(s) on sister city related events or activities.

a. Holiday Folk Fair

Member Durtka commented. Dates of the event will be November 22 to 24, 2024 with the theme "Celebrate the Culture of Traditional Art". Last year's booth was a success. City staff, on behalf of the committee, should continue to help coordinate this year's Milwaukee Sister Cities booth. More volunteers, commitments, and contributions were needed from everyone. Miniature country flags should not be given out to the public anymore due to the flags going against fair policy.

Chair Ald. Stamper said that he, his children, and others have volunteered at the booth or attended the fair and that for the booth to continue featuring stamps for youth passports.

Dr. Mosore said this year's booth should be more educational and involve more youths.

Ms. Moore said that she was appreciative of all the participation in the past and concurred that more help was needed.

b. Meet-and-greet event

Mr. Lee and Ms. Moore said that there has not been any coordination yet for a meet-and-greet event for this September due to other staffing obligations, that they would have to engage all the sister cities in the near future on planning for an event, and that the event may have to be pushed out later due to the lack of time and to align with the availability, once known, of the sister city communities.

Dr. Mosore thanked staff for their part in the success of last year's event and concurred that further planning was needed for the next event.

c. Other

There was no other discussion.

8. Public comments and/or announcements.

Al Durtka announced that he attended the 6th Annual 2024 US-China Sister Cities Summit in Tacoma, Washington from July 18-19, 2024. He casted a ballot on Milwaukee's behalf to select a new chairman and board members for Sister Cities International. The new chairman selected was Carlo Capua, and Sequanna Taylor was elected as a new board member.

Al Durtka announced a US-Japan Summit in Osaka, Japan from September 16-19, 2025 with the theme of "Celebrating Legacy and Developing the Future". Also there

will be a Japan 2025 World Exposition occurring during that time.

Dr. Mosore said that she was invited by Sister Cities International to present on African Diaspora this September in Dallas, Texas.

9. Next steps.

a. Agenda items for the next meeting

Items to include review and/or discussion of a revised 2023 annual report for Irpin (Ukraine), annual report questionnaire, Tema (Ghana) sister city relationship and local sponsorship status, Holiday Folk Fair Sister Cities booth, and meet-and-greet event.

b. Set next meeting date and time

Next meeting anticipated to be in September 2024 barring issues.

10. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

*Chris Lee, Staff Assistant
Council Records Section
City Clerk's Office*