



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

ALD. RUSSELL W. STAMPER, II, CHAIR

Al Durtka, Sanjib Bhattacharyya, Oscar Tovar, and Bruce Spann

**Staff Assistant, Chris Lee, 286-2232, Fax: 286-3456,
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Tuesday, June 18, 2019

1:30 PM

Room 301-B, Third Floor, City Hall

1. Call to order.

Meeting called to order at 1:35 p.m.

2. Roll call.

*Present 4 - Stamper, Tovar, Spann, Bhattacharyya
Excused 1 - Durtka*

Member Spann joined the committee at 2:58 p.m. during agenda item 9, c.

Member Bhattacharyya was welcomed as a new member and made brief comments. He is the Laboratory Director and Special Deputy Health Commissioner for the Milwaukee Health Department, has been involved in both national and international global health activities, and is a member of the Milwaukee Global Health Consortium.

3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from March 28, 2019.

Member Tovar moved approval, seconded by member Bhattacharyya, of the meeting minutes from March 28, 2019 without objection.

4. Review of the letter of intent to establish a sister city relationship with Tema, Ghana.

Individuals appearing:

James Starke, 1st Ald. Dist.

Dennis Annan, Ghana Milwaukee Association

Michael Anthony, Ghana Milwaukee Association

Esther Oduro, Ghana Milwaukee Association

Martin Oduro, Ghana Milwaukee Association

Mr. Starke commented. The interest to establish a sister city relationship with Tema, Ghana originated with Common Council President Ashanti Hamilton. From recent travels to Tema, Pres. Hamilton had observed many similarities between the two cities, especially the cities' similar spirit and character. There are possible cultural and economic exchanges that can take place between the cities. Their office organized partners and individuals with connections to Ghana, and the Ghana

Milwaukee Association (GMA) is the local nonprofit organization that would sponsor the relationship. There will be an event to call for the Africa diaspora community to return to Ghana later this year.

Mr. Oduro, Annan, Anthony, and Mrs. Oduro commented. GMA does not have a permanent location yet but does meet regularly. There is a growing Ghanaian community in Milwaukee with about 250-300 persons. Many are higher education students that offer talent, entrepreneurship, and student exchange opportunities. Student exchanges are occurring informally, but there is interest to create a formal program. Many Ghanaian students voluntarily come to Milwaukee to attend Cardinal Stritch University, UW-Milwaukee, and MSOE. Mr. Annan is from Ghana and had attended Cardinal Stritch University. There are 7 Ghanaian students in Mr. Anthony's church. Mr. Oduro is informally aiding a student who is going to Ghana. Mutual exchange between the cities would focus on education, student, culture, and industry. There is a conceptual interest for mutual commerce exchange, and an objective would be to establish one. Cultural exchange would entail African products and African events. A recent fundraiser was done to help orphanages back in Ghana, and the hope is to do more fundraising events. A recognized sister city relationship between the two cities would make travel between the two cities easier. Ghana was the first black African nation to gain independence from colonial rule in 1957. Many prominent figures, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., from the United States were present for the independence in Ghana in 1957. Tema is by the Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean and is used by other landlocked African countries for water transport.

Member Tovar moved approval, seconded by member Bhattacharyya, of the letter of intent and to extend to the Ghana Milwaukee Association an application to establish a sister city relationship between Milwaukee and Tema, Ghana. There was no objection.

Mr. Lee said that an application will be sent to GMA, GMA would have to submit and come back to the committee for review of the application, and the proposal would then require Common Council approval subsequently.

5. Review and approval of the sister city relationship renewal application for Medan, Indonesia.

Individuals appearing:

*May Yer Thao, Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce (HWCC)
Benevolentia Wandana*

Ms. Thao commented. She is the Executive Director of HWCC. HWCC provides financial resources and technical assistance to business and community development activities that improve economic opportunities in low-income and underserved communities. HWCC works with the whole Asian community collectively. HWCC is fully committed to continue its local sponsorship and the renewal of the sister city relationship. HWCC resources can be leveraged to help Asian communities and the workforce. HWCC works with the Hmong American Friendship Organization, which is primarily based on social service. The former main contact for the relationship, Khay Khong, left the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). They will try to regroup with WEDC.

Ms. Wandana commented. She is from Indonesia. The past local sponsor before HWCC was the Pan-African Community Association. The new objective for the relationship is to make it more romantic with a focus on mutual exchanges in food and beverage, travel and tourism, and healthcare. Local restaurants, like Bartolotta's, can

be leveraged to feature Indonesian food. Tourism can be promoted for both cities. The current nursing exchange effort with local hospitals in Milwaukee, via the efforts of Leni Siker, can continue to grow. Leni and she will go back to Indonesia separately soon. More updates on the relationship can be given after they come back from their trips. HWCC's willingness to be a part of the relationship is appreciated.

Member Bhattacharyya said that there should be further engagement with health care systems in Milwaukee from Indonesia and that there should be more healthcare talent brought to Milwaukee from Indonesia.

Member Tovar moved approval, seconded by member Bhattacharyya, of the renewal application from the Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce to extend the sister city relationship between Milwaukee and Medan, Indonesia. There was no objection.

Mr. Lee said that the renewal would next require the Common Council adoption process via a resolution file.

Chair Stamper said that he would sponsor the resolution file.

6. Review and approval of annual reports.

Meeting recessed at 2:02 p.m. and reconvened at 2:05 p.m.

a. Zadar, Croatia

Individual appearing:

Nevenka Lutzow Bralic, Federation of Croatian Societies Inc. of Milwaukee

Ms. Lutzow Bralic gave a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation is a supplement to revise the 2018 annual report, as requested by the committee, and gives information on a freshwater initiative for the sister city relationship. The report previously was based on the Milwaukee Croatian Tamburitizens cultural activities. The relationship signing ceremony was May 11, 2015. She and the federation had participated in the booth exhibit at the Holiday Folk Fair. Opportunities like the fair can be used to educate people on the relationship and the water initiative. Overall the relationship is focused on water, social, cultural, economic, and recreational mutual exchange. Zadar, despite having marine water, has a national heritage of fresh water. There is a proposed water health pilot program, led by herself, to work with 8th grade middle schoolers in the 53206 zip code area along with participation from Zadar and the Global Water Center to analyze water with a prototype water particle sensor. She would need to inquire and obtain participation from Zadar. Outreach goals would be for students to draw pictures of water future, perform analysis, and travel to the respective countries. The pilot program is based on environmental science as a precautionary principle, is a basic step towards making a correlation, and is focused on creating citizen scientists. She had studied the lead water issue at the School of Fresh Water Sciences and had reached out to the Health Department for data in the past.

Members commented. The pilot program would require further details, planning specifics, support from the scientific community, expected outcomes, and scientific participation from Zadar. The Health Department can assist. Connection with Milwaukee Public Schools can be made, and perhaps a school can be adopted.

Boris Nayflisch, Griffon Brands, appeared and commented. The European Union has a clean water act with strict guidelines for drinking water. The EU also has resources

and funding that perhaps can be obtained for the pilot program.

Member Bhattacharyya moved conditional approval, seconded by member Tovar, of the revised 2018 annual report for the sister city relationship with Zadar, Croatia with the condition that further details be submitted on planning, scientific community support, expected outcomes, and participation from Zadar for the water health pilot program. There was no objection.

b. Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea

Individual appearing:

Elizabeth Hittman, Environmental Collaboration Office

Ms. Hittman commented on the 2019 annual report. She has an office at the Global Water Center, and the Water Council is the local nonprofit sponsor. Relationship activities with Daegu have been quiet for the year due to changes in the presidency in South Korea and the stagnant progress of creating water clusters and a water district in Daegu. Amy Jensen from the Water Council had traveled two years ago to Daegu to attend a water conference there. Mayor Tom Barrett is invited to attend Daegu's annual water event this September. Delegations from Daegu regularly come to the United States, and there is anticipation that a delegation would come to attend the Water Council's upcoming water summit.

Member Tovar moved approval of the 2019 annual report for the sister city relationship with Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea. There was no objection.

7. Discussion with Port Milwaukee on sister city opportunities and exchanges.

Individual appearing:

Adam Schlicht, Port MKE Director

Director Schlicht gave a PowerPoint overview presentation of the Port's origins, operations, economic impact, international work, and relationships as follows:

The three Milwaukee freshwater rivers are a significant part of the Port's identity. The Port was created in 1921 by the State covering about 470 acres of both recreational and commercial parcels. There is significant multi-modal transportation connectivity at the Port to freeways, the Mississippi River, other ports in the country, and Class I rail. About 40 to 50 international ships annually come to the Port via the Great Lakes. Economic impact in 2018 for the Port was over \$100 million in business revenue and over 1300 jobs. Out of the Port's world markets, 67% is with northern and western Europe, 19% is with Latin America, 12% is with North Africa and the Middle East, and 2% is with Asia. Northern and western Europe has the easiest connectivity. Western Europe trade is currently challenging due to a tariff. Overall Port tonnage from 2014 to 2018 was an average of 2.5 to 2.6 tons per year. The tonnage for 2018 was 2.4 tons, which was a slight dip from the average due to a mine labor dispute and shutdown. Port work is 75% domestic and 25% international.

The most important trade partner for the Port is Canada. The Port's other significant trade partners come primarily from western and northern European countries like Belgium, Ireland, Tunisia, and Turkey. Main imports to the Port are salt and steel. Main exports out of the Port are grain and mining. All ships must have recognized vessel flags as a safety standard. Many landlocked countries use the recognized vessel flagged ships of other port countries. The Port has existing relationships with

various countries, as referenced, and is always trying to pursue relationships with new countries. Antwerp, Belgium is also an important trade partner.

Members inquired about the Port having relationships with the City's existing sister cities, the inspection of products coming into the Port, and resources and connections to provide to the sister cities.

Director Schlicht replied. The Port has not had any trade relations with the sister cities besides Ireland. Opportunities are there to create trade relations. The current tariff is negatively impacting Milwaukee and United States corn export to Europe where corn export now comes out of Canada instead. The Port is trying to increase its marketing and promotion. The Port is working to better educate customers, the supply chain, and freight forwarders to use Milwaukee. Inspection of products, such as food, that come through the Port currently is done by a private company at the harbor. The Port does not have inspection oversight but can be involved with inspection if a new tenant comes into the harbor. The Port has a newly improved and designed website that best can serve as a resource for the sister cities.

8. Sister city status updates.

a. Local sponsoring organizations.

There was no update from local sponsoring organizations.

b. Committee staff

Mr. Lee gave an update on the status of sister city relationships. There are 8 sister city relationships with 7 active and 1 expired. The expired relationship is with uMhlathuze, South Africa having expired on May 23, 2019. The last local sponsor, Pan-African Community Association, no longer exists. The last advocate contact, Joe Davis, no longer has interest. Mr. Davis and committee members were previously asked to inquire and obtain outside interests, but no such interest has been found to date. Perhaps the termination of the relationship with uMhlathuze can be an item for the committee to consider in the near future. There will be forthcoming sister city annual reports, once submitted, for the committee to consider in the future.

Chair Stamper concurred and asks that everyone, in the meantime, continue to seek out outside interest for renewing the relationship with uMhlathuze.

c. Other

There was no other update.

9. Discussion on sister city related events.

a. Meet and Greet

Chair Stamper said that the meet and greet event is still under development with staff, the hope is that progress can be made in the near future when City events slow down, and the hope is to share more information at the next meeting.

b. Holiday Folk Fair

Chair Stamper said that the booth exhibit at the fair will occur again, staff will coordinate, and the hope is to share more information at the next meeting.

c. *Tarime, Tanzania December 2019 trip*

Individual appearing:

Christine Thompson Mosore, Mosorec International Foundation, Inc.

Member Spann joined the committee at 2:58 p.m.

Ms. Thompson Mosore gave an update. She recently went to Tarime back in March and April. She met with the new district commissioner and foundation team in Tarime. The cultural center in Tarime will need to be rebuilt. The foundation in Tarime acquired its first van and took many school children on rides, some for the first time in their lives. Underwears were donated to school girls and pens and some underwear were donated to school boys. On the water well in Tarime, which is halfway done, there is a tank that is being used to collect rain water for drinking. However, the rain water still needs purification. The goal is to acquire an affordable purification system with the help of Dr. Moe Mukiibi and Stonehouse Water Technologies. Training on the system can be given to Tarime locals for free, but travel costs for Dr. Mukiibi's team to go there would need to be covered. Member Spann has been involved with the well efforts. There has been a meeting with Waterboys, and Waterboys have not made a decision on whether to help fund the remainder of the well project. The next delegation trip to Tanzania, which would include Tarime and Dar es Salaam, is December 5 to 14, 2019. All members and City officials are invited. Tarime requests for a City official go to Tarime with official written recognition, such as a letter, which has yet to occur. Also of request is a meeting of officials with the Mayor Barrett present, which has yet to occur. The trip will be 8 full days. Flight connection would be through Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Cost per person would be \$2900, which would cover everything except VISAs and safari expenses.

Member Tovar said that City officials do not have the funding to make significant travel trips, and any kind of significant trip would have to be out-of-pocket.

Member Spann said that he is part of the December trip.

Chair Stamper commented. He will work with staff to generate a formal letter to recognize member Spann as a committee member from the City for purposes of the December trip. Perhaps Tarime officials can be invited to the committee's meet-and-greet event that it is preparing for.

d. *Other*

Mr. Lee said that the committee needs to authorize an individual on behalf of the City to cast ballets at the upcoming 2019 Sister Cities International annual conference in Houston, Texas from July 17-19, 2019. Member Durtka previously was given the authority in recent years.

Member Spann said that he will also attend the conference.

Member Tovar moved approval for member Durtka to have the authority to cast ballets at the upcoming 2019 Sister Cities International conference, as stated. There was no objection.

10. Announcements.

There were no announcements.

11. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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