



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
53202

## Meeting Minutes

### SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

**ALD. KHALIF J. RAINEY, CHAIR**

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

**Staff Assistant, Chris Lee, 286-2232, Fax: 286-3456,  
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**Legislative Liaison, Luke Knapp, 286-8637,  
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**Wednesday, April 13, 2022**

**2:30 PM**

**Virtual Meeting**

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**This will be 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/584992021>. You can also dial in using your phone United States: +1 (646) 749-3122 and Access Code: 584-992-021.**

**1. Call to order.**

*The meeting was called to order at 2:31 p.m.*

**2. Roll call.**

**Present** 4 - Durtka, Tovar, Rainey, Spann

**Excused** 1 - Bhattacharyya

**Also present:**

*Christine Thompson-Mosore, Mosorec International Foundation Inc.  
Molly Modlinski, Celtic Milwaukee  
Joseph Spolowicz, St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church  
Boris Nayflisch  
Martin Oduro, Ghana-Milwaukee Association Inc.  
Isaac, Ghana-Milwaukee Association Inc.  
Alisha Klapps-Balistreri, Marquette University Trinity Fellowship Program  
David Misky, Dept. of City Development  
Adam Tindall-Schlicht, Port Milwaukee  
Ray Boynes (Nitte)  
Chey Martin*

**3. Review and approval of the previous meeting minutes from February 9, 2022.**

*The meeting minutes from February 9, 2022 were approved without objection.*

**4. Review and approval of sister city relationship annual reports.**

*a. Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea 2021 report (due 5/6/21)*

*Mr. Lee said that the committee had held the submitted 2021 annual report for further information on progress which they felt was lacking, that the point of contact, Elizabeth Hittman, was no longer working with the City's Environmental Collaboration Office (ECO), that ECO was acting on behalf of the local sponsor The Water Council, and that Ms. Hittman had indicated that ECO and The Water Council would let the relationship expire and would not sponsor and progress the relationship any further.*

*Mr. Tovar concurred and added that ECO had indicated to him that there was no current and future momentum.*

*Ms. Thompson Mosore inquired about receipt of written notification from The Water Council of their intentions.*

*Mr. Lee said that there was email and phone communication with ECO and that formal written correspondence and response from The Water Council was lacking despite his requests.*

*Member Durtka moved approval of the 2021 annual report and letting the relationship expire. There was no objection.*

*b. Galway, Ireland 2022 report (due 3/16/22)*

*Ms. Modlinski presented their 2022 annual report. There were obstacles with events and activities in 2021 due to the pandemic. Activities were both in-person and virtual in 2021. Their school taught virtually Irish dance with 6 instructors and 68 students participating. Their music school taught virtually with 187 students participating. Irish Fest was virtual with 3 musicians participating from Galway. For 2022 there were plans to have activities return to in-person including Irish Fest which would be held August 18-21 at the Summer Fest grounds.*

*Member Spann moved approval, seconded by member Tovar, of the 2022 annual report. There was no objection.*

**5. Update on sister city relationships.**

*a. Irpin, Ukraine*

*Mr. Spolowicz and Nayflish gave an update. Their church had fundraised about \$130,000 and sent \$90,000 over to Ukraine in humanitarian relief. There has been tremendous community support. They have participated in speaking events regarding the war invasion in Ukraine. Irpin had become an inhabitable and dangerous city in rubble with explosives and tremendous infrastructure and building damage. City workers were trying to restore critical utilities, communications, and infrastructure. Explosives and people under rubble were being recovered. Irpin officials had sent correspondence to Milwaukee officials listing items and requesting direct support on those items. The hope was that Milwaukee can be creative in its support due their lacking of budgeting for sister cities.*

*Members questioned US federal support and Ukraine refugees.*

*Linda O'Connell, Racine Sister City Council, said that they would like to make a*

*donation to Irpin.*

*Member Spann said that his firm would like to make a contribution.*

*Mr. Nayflish replied. US federal funds were forwarded to Ukraine in general and not to specific cities, those federal funds were being used for war purposes, and other European sister cities had provided equipment, such as ambulances and a fire truck, to Irpin. Interested parties wanting to make donations could contact him and their church. Only Ukrainians with VISAs, 4 families known so far, have been able to relocate to Milwaukee as human paroles and not as refugees. They have been only women and children. There have been very small refugees at the US and Mexican border.*

*Member Durtka said that Ukrainians would have to apply as asylees and his agency was working with those in the City.*

*Mr. Nayflish inquired about Milwaukee creating a sister city fund account, conducting events to contribute funds into the account with the purpose to contribute to Ukraine, and said that he could donate seed money into the account.*

*Member Tovar said that the Mayor's Office was reviewing the Irpin request letter, would explore what could be provided, and was reaching out to the Fire Department on the requested public safety items.*

*Chair Rainey said that a sister city fund account had been established, there was no funds yet, fundraising would need to be done, and further discussions could be had offline.*

*b. Tema, Ghana*

*Mr. Oduro said that Tema officials were now ready to pursue a sister city relationship agreement signing ceremony and inquired about ceremonial process.*

*Mr. Lee said that a draft agreement would be sent to Mr. Oduro's team to forward to Tema for review and approval, the draft agreement would need both cities' blessing, the Tema delegation's anticipated travel dates should be forwarded to Mayor Johnson's office, a final date at Milwaukee City Hall would be scheduled based on both mayor's availability, and the local sponsoring organization would have to serve as the main host to assist the Tema delegation.*

*Member Tovar said that the Mayor's Office could also assist with connecting the delegation to various agencies to meet with them.*

*Ms. Thompson Mosore said that she could also be a resource of assistance.*

*c. Tarime District, Tanzania*

*Ms. Thompson Mosore said that her foundation planned to do virtual activities with youths for the summer to support the relationship.*

*d. Other*

*Mr. Lee gave an update. There were 6 active sister city relationships: Bomet County (Kenya), Daegu Metropolitan City (South Korea), Galway (Ireland), Irpin (Ukraine),*

*Tarime District (Tanzania), and Zadar (Croatia). The relationship with Daegu was expiring this September. All annual reports from all relationships were current. The relationship with Tema, Ghana was pending an agreement signing ceremony.*

**6. Communication or review of sister city programming, promotion, capacity, resources, funding, collaborations, or infrastructure.**

*a. Dedicated personnel*

*i. Marquette University Trinity Fellowship Program*

*Ms. Klapps-Balistreri gave a presentation. She was the interim director. Their fellowship program was a possible suitable option for Milwaukee to add staffing to its sister city program, build capacity, and provide activation. The fellowship program was a 21-month work study model for graduate fellows. They would work 18 hours a week during the academic year and 40 hours a week during the summer. The program was an opportunity for graduate fellows to continue to grow in their leadership. Desirable employers were those willing to mentor, server, and coach. The university would provide their fellows with resources, professional development opportunities, feedback and performance evaluations. Some fellowship examples would include those at WRTP/Big Step, Guest House, and the International Institute of Wisconsin. The university had over 80 partnerships and helped to connect partners and resources together. Placements for the next fellowship term would start in September 2023. Application was open for about 12 fellows and 12 host organizations. The application deadline would be in February 2023. The agency fee (paid by the host) would be \$1,600 a month and \$33,600 in total over a 21-month term. Fellows and hosts would be intentionally ranked and matched accordingly.*

*Member Durtka added that the MU Trinity fellowship program was excellent, had top level students, has staffed his organization, and would be very appropriate for Milwaukee's sister city program.*

*b. Collaborations*

*ii. Department of City Development*

*Mr. Misky said that DCD would meet with foreign delegations sometimes, had learned of the delegation (via Talgo) and met with the Governor of Lagos (Nigeria) a few months ago, and that the governor bought a train set from Talgo.*

*Mr. Misky inquired how DCD would bring delegation matters that they know of to the committee's attention.*

*Members discussed that DCD should inform clerk staff of any DCD dealings with foreign delegations, commended member Durtka as a recipient of a UW alumni lifetime achievement award relative to international relations and refugee work, that there was interest with a local engineering firm through Ola Olapo to establish a sister city relationship with Lagos.*

*Chair Rainey inquired about how the committee could support DCD and international relationship activities.*

*Mr. Misky replied that the committee should support M7's existing international relationships and global companies.*

*ii. Office of Equity and Inclusion*

*Mr. Lee said that Nikki Purvis from OEI was invited and was not present possibly due to another commitment.*

*This item was held.*

*c. Display**i. Port Milwaukee*

*Mr. Tindall-Schlicht commented. The Port could promote via display the sister cities via signage through the Lake Express High Speed Terminals, Freshwater Plaza water park land near the School of Freshwater Sciences, and with cruise ships (signs have to be transient).*

*Member Durtka said the recognition should not be limited to the sister cities but also be inclusive of all the different communities at the Port, such as the Polish, Japanese, and Kaszube.*

*Mr. Tindall-Schlicht concurred that the Port was historically a Polish and Kaszube community and added that the Port was meeting with surviving Kaszube descendants, signage would be placed at Jones Island to honor the Kaszube, he planned to attend a Kaszube in-person annual gathering this August, and the Port had contributed \$2,500 to sponsor a documentary project on the port and Kaszube history.*

*ii. General Mitchell International Airport*

*Member Tovar said that County airport representatives, Luis Hernandez and Harold Meiser, were no longer logged onto the meeting, had indicated willingness to collaborate a display at the airport, and he would follow-up with the representatives.*

*This discussion was held with no objection.*

*d. Milwaukee Code of Ordinances**i. Sister Cities Committee membership*

*Members said that they would like to have further research before considering to make changes to the committee membership.*

*This discussion was held with no objection.*

*e. Sister Cities fund*

*Chair Rainey updated that the fund had been established with no funds.*

*f. Other*

*There was no other discussion.*

**7. Communication on establishing new sister city relationships.**

a. Lagos, Nigeria

*Member Spann said that, as previously discussed earlier in the meeting, there was initial conversations and strong local Nigerian community interest to work towards establishing a sister city relationship with Lagos.*

*This discussion was held without objection.*

b. British Virgin Islands

*Mr. Boynes gave a presentation. He was leading a effort and had interest to establish a sister city relationship with the British Virgin Islands. He was originally from the Islands, moved to the US in 1988, and still has family there. There was a potential local nonprofit sponsor. Tourism, media, and creative artistic exchanges were strong possible foundations for a relationship. The Islands' economy was based on tourism. His family and business colleagues were part of or have been engaged with the tourism and the media industry in the Islands. He and his creative colleagues had recently traveled to the Islands during the pandemic to film there with the aide of his family there. He was a part of the Community Corridor Development Team and creative corridor helping to swap talent. Possible sister city relationship collaborations would include creative talent exchange, import/export of commodities, tourism, festivals, COVID relief, hurricane relief, maritime transport, and exchange of best practices. The Islands were still in need of hurricane relief from recent and ongoing storms. Milwaukee should include the Caribbean in its festivals, which has been lacking. He has helped bring a music artist from the Islands to perform in Milwaukee. There was a planned trip to the Islands at the end of July and early August.*

*Mr. Martin added that the Community Within the Corridor has worked with partners to establish apprenticeship programs; national experts were available to provide classroom support, local workforce, and technicians; and youths could be employed at the Islands.*

*Members and Ms. Thompson Mosore questioned local community support, sponsorship, and timeline.*

*Mr. Boynes replied that there was local support and sponsorship through the Creative Corridor and that the intent was to establishing a relationship as soon as possible.*

*Mr. Boynes inquired about the formal process to establish a sister city relationship.*

*Mr. Lee said that the process was not immediate and would entail several possible months, required first a submission of a letter of intent from a local nonprofit sponsor, review of the LOI and extension of an application from the committee, submission of an application from the local sponsor, review and approval of the application by the committee, review and approval of legislation to establish the relationship via the Common Council process, mayoral signature of the legislation, lastly completion of signed agreements via a signing ceremony, and that he would provide further information to Mr. Boynes offline.*

*Ms. Thompson Mosore said that she could be of assistance.*

c. Belize

*Chair Rainey said that he had prepared and sent a letter, with assistance from the City*

*Clerk, to Belize officials to inquire about a possible sister city but had not received a response.*

*d. Other*

*There was no other discussion.*

**8. Communication on sister city related events or activities.**

*a. Meet-and-greet*

*Ms. Thompson Mosore said that she was helping to coordinate the event; it should be a first simple small gathering with booths, food, and local sponsors participating; subsequent events would be bigger as envisioned by some members; it could be held in the City Hall rotunda this year; the event had been discussed for many years and should not be delayed any longer; and she would like to get a working group, including all sister city relationship local sponsoring representatives, to plan the event.*

*Chair Rainey said that the City should still lead the event and that the date, time, and rotunda reservation should be secured once set.*

*Member Tovar said that Ms. Thompson Mosore should include him and start contacting the other local sponsors offline to start planning; the event should occur in the fall; and a fuller discussion on the event should be held at the next meeting with all local sponsors participating.*

*Ms. Bralic said that they could provide deserts.*

*Mr. Nayflisch said that they could provide food, artists, and dancers.*

*b. Sister Cities International annual conference*

*Member Durtka said that the conference would be held in New Mexico in July, another major SCI conference on Mexican sister city relationships would be held later in the year, and that Milwaukee should consider establishing a Mexican sister city relationship.*

*c. Holiday Folk Fair*

*Member Durtka said that the fair would occur a week prior to Thanksgiving, had received participation requests from many overseas; was still in development; and that he would keep the committee informed.*

*d. Other*

*There was no other discussion.*

**9. Public comments.**

*There were no public comments.*

**10. Announcements.**

*There were no announcements.*

**11. Next steps.**

*a. Agenda items for the next meeting*

*Items to include termination of the sister city relationship with Daegu Metropolitan City (South Korea), Office of Equity and Inclusion, General Mitchell International Airport, Sister Cities Committee membership, establishing new sister city relationships (Lagos, British Virgin Islands, Belize) if ready, and meet-and-greet.*

*Additional items to be determined.*

*b. Set next meeting date(s) and time(s)*

*Next quarterly meeting to be determined.*

**12. Adjournment.**

*The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.*

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