

MINUTES FOR THE  
Sister Cities ADVISORY BOARD  
Date: February 7th, 2024  
*Time: 5:00PM-6:30PM*

**Roll Call**

The following members of the Sister Cities Advisory Board were present:

- Olga Efimova
- Annie Quan
- Ross Chambless
- Matilyn Mortensen
- Ahimara Suarez
- Sheri Sorenson
- Nicole Pessetto
- Ricardo Becerra

The following members of the Sister Cities Advisory Board were absent:

- John Wilson
- Joe Zeidner

Also Present:

- Public: Steven Lemmon

1. **Approval of the Minutes**

Quan finds roll call errors on January meetings. Paluh fixes the error. Mortensen motions to approve 1/3/24 minutes. Quan seconds. All are in favor of approval of minutes. Minutes are approved for January 3rd, 2024

## **Public Comment:**

No public comment was made.

## **Staff Report:**

Matheson gives update:

International interest in Salt Lake City has increased since we announced the hope to host the 2034 Olympics. Matheson shared diplomacy news along with Sister Cities for this report.

- Mortenson had sent an email to Matheson about a new HB404 Bill. City staff looked into its language.
  - The HB404 Bill was announced by the Utah Legislature.
    - It mentions Sister Cities.
  - City staff reviewed the bill, and the city will stay neutral on the bill as of now.
  - The bill would require, if it passes, that any new or any renewed sister city relationships with any Utah city and a foreign city would first have to affirm that they did not have any businesses that use forced labor within their city boundaries.
    - This would not impact any of our current sister cities.
  - There's also a second piece of the bill which deals with procurement, and this would disallow any government entity from engaging in procurement with any business that is affiliated with Iran, Russia, and North Korea
  - If this bill passes, city staff will get more clarification and give more information to the board as it becomes available.
- The Annual Report was completed and sent to the Mayor's office.
  - Staff is in the process of sending a transmittal to the City Council and city staff will learn if the board and staff will need to present the report in person.
- Economic Development staff met with Council Member Eva Lopez Chavez and she is interested in a sister city in Mexico.
- Plan committee (Matheson, Paluh, Chambless, Wilson) are working together to finalize Sister City Plan
  - Paluh shared screen of 3 option plan document for Sister Cities Program
    - These options are meant to spur thoughtful discussion and help City leadership envision a framework for the program's potential.
  - Matheson reviews draft options with the board and will send documents to the board to review once it is farther along in its drafting process.

- Request for Sister Cities
  - Sister city inquiries
    - Almaloya de Juárez, Mexico
      - Staff met with staff from Almaloya
        - They gave a presentation on their city's culture and economy.
      - Matheson let them know that to complete a sister city application, the application needs to be sponsored by a Salt Lake resident or local organization
      - Almaloya staff are going to reach out to University of Utah for a sponsorship
      - Matheson also let their staff know that processing applications is on hold until more direction is given from city leadership
    - Nepal
      - This had been received shortly before meeting and no updates were given
- Recent delegation visits
  - Canadian Consul General
    - Matheson and Mayor Mendenhall met with Consul General
  - Mongolian Ambassador, Mayor of Ulaanbaatar, Member of City Council, and others from Mongolia
    - Department of Economic Development staff met with delegation
- Utah Global Diplomacy
  - City staff had the opportunity to host members of the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). With representatives from Croatia, Finland, Italy, and Latvia, conversation was about the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem and providing support for small businesses in respective cities.
- Matheson met with State Dept of Division of Subnational Diplomacy
  - Matheson shares that this department could be a useful division for resources for the board in the future.
- New application process.
  - Matheson sent board an email about a proposed process to review applications for new board members
  - Currently, staff has three applications.
  - This new proposed process would include a member committee that reviews applications, they are then interviewed, and then a recommendation is given to the full board to approve or not.
  - Quan and Greis interviewed the 3 candidates already and will have a formalized recommendation for the next board meeting

## 2. **Briefings by the Staff**

### a. Updates on Sister Cities:

#### i. Chernivtsi, Ukraine:

1. Sorenson helped organize a donation event at the Kris Kringle Market for Ukrainian refugees.
  - a. 20 families brought wares. Donations included boots and coats for kids for Christmas along with some non-perishable food.
  - b. \$2,000 was made by refugees at the event who were selling items.
2. Housing issues continue to be an issue for Ukrainian refugees
  - a. Issue comes from them not being permanent residents nor a steady income
3. Refugees can now have a Ukrainian translator sit with them for a Utah Drivers Test.
  - a. This is a big win as this driver's license issue has continued for some time

#### ii. Izhevsk, Russia:

1. No updates from Olga.
2. Olga shares examples of cities working together during difficult times:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2R5Jf33TU44&list=RD2R5Jf33TU44&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2R5Jf33TU44&list=RD2R5Jf33TU44&start_radio=1)

#### iii. Keelung, Taiwan:

1. Quan shares that Mrs. Yee invited the board to Chinese New Year event on Saturday, February 10th, 2024
2. Mortensen and Quan will coordinate getting Mrs. Yee's historical books scanned and cc staff in any emails regarding plans.

#### iv. Matsumoto, Japan:

1. Second student exchange took place between students in Salt Lake and Matsumoto.
2. Matheson and mayor staff met with Matsumoto staff about a potential visit to Matsumoto in the fall

- a. Mayor Mendenhall has interest in Matsumoto's industry and what we can learn from their city's economy.
      - i. This would be a working trip
    - b. Trip may take place between August and October
- v. Torino, Italy:
  - 1. Pessetto has no updates regarding Torino relationship, but shares pictures from San Francisco of Sister Cities logos projects on airport floors.
    - a. Pessetto would like to do something similar here in Salt Lake
      - i. Matheson saw banners in Ogden, UT about their sister cities relationship in Germany
      - ii. Matheson will get in contact with airport staff about a potential exhibition displaying sister cities relationships at the airport.
      - iii. Mortensen saw a sign showing how far sister cities were from San Francisco while visiting as well and thinks it's a good idea for SLC as well
      - iv. Staff will report back at next board meeting
  - 2. Pessetto reminds the board of a Facebook page that has historical images of the Torino SLC relationship.
    - a. City staff has reviewed the page and when bandwidth is available, will document images in city records.
- vi. Trujillo, Peru:
  - 1. Becerra gives an update.
    - a. Matheson is going to contact airports in Trujillo
    - b. Matheson reiterates that Salt Lake is getting a Consul General from Peru
      - i. This has been put on hold because Peruvian consul is waiting to get a credentials from Peruvian government
      - ii. Discussion of students exchanges with Peruvian students
        - 1. Matheson will connect with the city education advisor after firefighter exchange takes place

2. Once Matheson gets more information, she will connect with Becerra.

**3. Business**

- a. New Members
  - i. Discussed during Staff Report
- b. City Application Committee
  - i. Staff would like to introduce a new committee that will go through applications for new cities.
    1. However, staff is waiting on guidance from city leadership on more guidelines when accepting or denying new city relationships

**4. Adjournment**

Pesetto motions to adjourn. Mortensen seconds. All are in favor of adjourning.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ross Chambless", is written over a horizontal line.

Ross Chambless, Chairperson

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Sister Cities Advisory Board meeting held on February 7th, 2024.

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