

MINUTES FOR THE  
Sister Cities ADVISORY BOARD  
Date: September 4th, 2024  
*Time: 5:00PM-6:30PM*

**Roll Call:**

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

- Ross Chambless
- Annie Quan
- Ahimara Suarez
- John Wilson
- Stacey Adams
- Matilyn Mortensen
- Sheri Sorenson
- Rose Kjesbo

Also Present:

- Katherine Matheson (Staff)
- Joshua Paluh

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

- Ricardo Becerra
- Nicole Pessetto
- Olga Efimova

**Approval of the Minutes:**

Sorenson motions to approve 6/5/24 minutes. Wilson seconds. All are in favor of approval of minutes. Minutes are approved for June 5th, 2024

**Public Comment:**

Alan Lipp - Volunteer for August Mission who helps support Ukraine. Lipp met with Matheson and Paluh prior to this meeting. They are interested in continuing the partnership between Chernivtsi and Salt Lake City during this time of wartime in the

country. August Mission led a trade mission with city leadership and World Trade Center to Ukraine last year.

**Staff Report:**

1. The Mayor and Council approved an increased budget for the program. Matheson can't remember exact numbers but believe it is around \$30,000 for the program, and \$40,000 for a new part time staff. They will be generally assisting Matheson and Paluh to help build the program.
2. Utah Consular Corp Leadership - they are interested in our program and they want to see some overlap between the programs. Staff is in early communications with their leadership and hope to continue to learn about their program and find way to work together
3. Staff is looking to hire a new staff member
  - a. This position is taking longer to hire due to the governmental process
  - b. Team is actively working on it. Matheson is hopeful they are almost ready to post an hire.
4. Jane Kim is in the process of being brought on the board. She needs approval of City Council first. This will hopefully take place in the next month.
5. Matheson, Paluh, and EconDev leader met with Suely Saro, Council Member, from Long Beach. They are hosting the Olympics in Los Angeles in 2028 and staff wants to learn more about their program.
  - a. Meeting was introductory meeting
  - b. Their Sister City program is run by nonprofit
  - c. Matheson hopes to build a connection with them to learn more about Sister City programming
6. The SLC Government design team has helped staff create banners and collateral for Sister City tabling at community events.
  - a. PAL is interested in learning more about our program and helping tell the story of the program and share with the city via social media
  - b. They are looking to some video projects and meet with community members who have known about the program
7. Paluh, Matheson, and the Economic Development Business Development team met with a Utah Diplomacy delegation from China.
  - a. The Business Development shared experiences working with Small Businesses.
8. Matheson gives a reminder for board to OPMA trainings. These are required yearly.

**Briefings by the Staff:**

- a. Updates on Sister Cities:
  - i. Chernivtsi, Ukraine:

1. Independence Day Celebration was a huge success in Salt Lake City. 300-400 people attended.
  2. Housing continues to be a difficulty for refugees in Salt Lake City
    - a. Sorenson has been learning about small housing builds
  3. Matheson has spoke with the August Mission team and has a joint meeting with US Aid soon.
- ii. Izhevsk, Russia:
1. No Updates
- iii. Keelung, Taiwan:
1. Annie Quan asked a question about how the board determines if a Sister City relationship needs to be sunset (terminated).
    - a. General discussion and Chambless would like to continue that conversation in the future.
    - b. Quan brings this up due the challenge of getting ahold of Keelung, Taiwan partners over the past year.
    - c. Matheson suggests connecting with community member Margaret Yee as well as our police department. Quan agrees and will start with Margaret Yee to try to find a connection
- iv. Matsumoto, Japan:
1. Chambless lets board know that he is working with Lindsey Nikola in the Mayor's Office on trip to Japan
  2. Students visiting from Matsumoto were successful.
    - a. Chambless is not sure they will do it every year but would like the program to continue in the future
- v. Trujillo, Peru:
1. Matheson shares that the team met with Leonardo, but it is not a good fit for the artifact project. Becerra is checking with University of Utah
- vi. Torino, Italy:
1. Staff and board will be tabling at Festa Italiana
  2. Matheson is going to try to reconnect with the Honorary Consul. He can work through the Consul General
  3. Sister Cities has been put on a hold in some capacity in Torino
  4. Mayor unfortunately did not get to meet with Torino Mayor during Olympic Games

## **Business:**

1. Matsumoto Trip
  - a. Matheson will be giving Salt Lake City Whale Miniature as a gift to Matsumoto city when the mayor visits
2. Voting on new voting process for approving sister cities
  - a. Subcommittee shares information
    - i. Quan explains voting process is broken down into different criterias
      1. Geography, population size, university connections, etc.
    - ii. Decided application process will be open for only a set time frame
      1. October 31st through December 31st each year
    - iii. Outside committee which includes Council Office, Mayor's Office, World Trade Center, Utah Global Diplomacy, Arts Council, Salt Lake School District that will advise process
    - iv. Matheson includes there will be a yes/no question on application about the stability of the government. Are they stable enough to keep a relationship going?
  - b. Wilson has asked a question about a Friendship City. Does the board need to wait the three period if the city is not working out from the beginning
    - i. Matheson thinks subcommittee should discuss this further
  - c. Matheson shares questions from leaderships about accepting too many sister cities
    - i. Quan thinks the sister city friendship help draw out process
    - ii. Matheson is concerned about three cities being friendship cities at the same time and then the board only being able to pick one at the end of the process
  - d. Adams asks about us Human Rights concerns when selecting Sister Cities
    - i. Chambless shares that the state has put forth a ruling that a sister city relationship cannot be made in a place where child labor is allowed.
    - ii. Adams says she is thinking about LGBTQ and reproductive freedoms that are not allowed in certain areas of the world.
      1. Adams thinks this will likely be a case by case basis
    - iii. Sorenson thinks it's important the board is doing research before making a decision in this situation
    - iv. Chambless shares that its important have culture synergies with or have similar traits to Salt Lake
    - v. Mortensen says that it's important to take this view from a city view seeing that Utah as a whole does not do a good job at supporting

LGBTQ rights. The city needs to be mindful of how they look to the rest of the world too. Does the Salt Lake Sister City want to be viewed in the context of the entire state or as a city?

- e. Adams asks a follow up question about First Nations internationally or in the U.S and if the board would consider them?
  - i. Matheson shares that she met someone that started the first sister city relationship with a tribe. It has been done. The subcommittee hasn't discussed it, but she said that she thinks they would consider. Chambless agrees that they would as well.
- f. Wilson asks if the board knows a friendship city is not working do they have to wait 3 years to cancel a friendship city relationship?
  - i. Matheson says that the board will have to add something to our process to include this. Matheson says they will have to be cautious on how the board denies a friendship city.
- g. City leadership thinks that the board should do one new sister city relationship max one every 3 years
  - i. Wilson thinks the board should increase relationships prior to the Olympics.
  - ii. Wilson asks if there are friendship cities of the past that have got forgotten as leadership has changed in the city.
    - 1. Sorenson says that does not believe so.
- h. Adams asked does the board pursue relationships?
  - i. Matheson thinks the applications will probably be too much due to Olympics to focus on pursue
  - ii. Quan brings up that there was a council member that was interested in going after a sister city program
- i. Kjesbo brings up that this process should be reviewed each year along with the relationships to decide if they are to continue.
- j. Paluh brings up that it is important to think about the process of removing cities as well. The conversation is almost as large as the application process.
- k. Quan thinks the subcommittee needs to create a process document, define the life cycle of the application process, an assessment of how to let city's go, and a process for Friendship Cities to go to Sister Cities.
  - i. Matheson and Chambless think the subcommittee should plan to meet prior to November meeting
- l. Chambless brings up that the board should hold off on a vote until the subcommittee meets.

- m. Matheson thinks the board should move to approve what the board currently has and then add necessary amendments once the subcommittee looks at the process.
    - i. Wilson motions to approve. Soreson approves and board approves
  - n. Board agrees that there should be a maximum of one sister city that can approved every three years
- 3. Festa Italiana
  - a. Matheson will reshare sign ups for tablings
- 4. Fall Schedule Meeting
  - a. Next meeting will be November
  - b. Board will need to start working on Annual Report
- 5. Expectations of Board and Staff
  - a. Matheson says in general be working with your committee. Always include staff on communications
  - b. Matheson and Chambless are going to work tougher to help board understand their roles on the board
    - i. Want to create more clarity to help with their role
- 6. Delay ByLaw Adjustment
  - a. Originally were discussing including public on subcommittees
  - b. Matheson shares that the board should not be included this until city staff member is hired
  - c. Bandwidth issue
- 7. Adams asks about how to pick a subcommittee?
  - a. Matheson will help with the process of selecting one.
- 8. Funding a cultural event per year
  - a. This year the board funded Festa Italiana but if board has an ideas for next year
  - b. Cultural event hosted by committee
- 9. Wilson wants to include a discussion about other cities that have sister cities in Utah for the next meeting

**Adjournment:**

Adams motions to adjourn. Kjesbo seconds. All are in favor of adjourning.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ross Chambless". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Ross" is written with a large, looped 'R'. The last name "Chambless" is written with a large, looped 'C' and a trailing flourish.

Ross Chambless, Chairperson

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Sister Cities Advisory Board meeting held on September 4th, 2024.

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