

MINUTES FOR THE  
SISTER CITIES ADVISORY BOARD  
May 7th 2025  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111  
5:00PM - 6:30PM

**Roll Call**

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

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

Also Present:

- Katherine Matheson (Staff)
- Joshua Paluh (Staff)
- Mariah Johnson (Staff)

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

- Sheri Sorenson
- Olga Efimova

**Approval of the minutes**

Review and Approval of February 5th, 2025 Sister Cities Board Minutes - Wilson motions. Adams seconds. All approved.

**Public Comment**

Alan Lipp wanted an update on SLC's Sister City relationship with Cherniski, Ukraine. Matheson said there would be a detailed status update later in the meeting.

**Business**

Presentation on Quezon City, Philippines with Emilio Mael Camu

- Camu wasn't present to give a presentation so the board moved to the next item of business. .

Discussion of ideas for advancing community engagement and awareness of Sister Cities:

- The board discussed different ideas that they had during their one-on-one meetings with board chairs.
- Mortensen would like to figure out something with the public library system, such as a cook night or have them pull books from that region and highlight them for a time. The board thinks this is a good idea since the library has funding for community events and it might not eat into the Sister Cities budget.
- Mortensen talked about looking at other partnerships, with Art Galleries for example.
- Quan brought up a pen pal program.
  - Matheson said we have been working on getting a pen pal program going and will update later in the meeting.
- Wilson would like to see more social media posting about the program to bring awareness.
- Wilson would also like to find former residents in each of the cities to help strengthen the database of contacts. Have them come and talk at different events or just be a supporter of the events.
  - Matheson mentioned that the staff and chairs discussed ideas about collecting contacts and has a solution that will be mentioned during staff update.
- Board talked about creating a sub committee group to help flush out potential resources and engagement activities.
- Ideas floating around to figure out how to connect on the tourism front in each of the Sister Cities.
- Matheson brought up the potential conversation about engaging the board within itself and frequency of meetings.
- Adams talked about work meetings instead of board meetings. Making asks of each of the board members.
- Quan talked about the work model they have on the Spy Hop board.
- Sister Cities "In a Box", a suggested program to educate school students or families about the six different Sister Cities.
- Frequency of Board Meetings
  - The board all agrees that board meeting frequency should be kept to every other month, but desire to find other ways to meet to get things done.
  - Board just needs to make sure they don't go over the quorum limit of 4 voting members currently.
  - Chambless wants to have more discussion on having a subcommittee to help those who want to be engaged more.
- Outreach Events- Living Traditions
  - Matheson wants the board to help fill the tabling timeslots.
  - Board talked and divided up the timeslots.
  - Johnson and Matheson are going to send out the signup sheet again for the board to look over and sign-up.

- Discussion: Re-activating relationships from emeritus status
  - Staff had two requests about bringing cities out of emeritus status.
  - Board asked how many cities are in emeritus status.
    - There are three, Ireland, Bolivia, and the Philippines.
  - The board will pursue this topic more as more details come to light from those interested in upping the relationships.
  - The consul general of Ireland said there is an organization in SLC that might be interested in helping up the relationship.

### **Staff Report**

- Josh Paluh is leaving SLC
- Submission and presentation of 2024 Annual Report Status
  - Chambless and Matheson presented to the City Council.
  - It went well, and the council had a few questions for us, including where is the strategic plan.
- Updates Sister City Application Review Committee
  - Staff informed the board that they are no longer pursuing a relationship from the applicants, because they were asked to look at a relationship with Mexico from the Mayor and City Council.
  - Wilson wants a question posed to the public about where they want to see a Sister City at tabling events.
  - Lots of places have reached out and staff doesn't want the board to feel like their work was wasted.
- Pen Pal Program
  - Trujillo, Matsumoto, Chernivtsi
  - Staff needs to put together a better outline of the specifics of the program for contact in Matsumoto
  - Working with Salt Lake City School Foundation to support the teachers with a stipend.
- Google Contacts Forum
  - Technology to help board members share connections that they've made.
  - Staff will send the forum out to board members to access.
- Diplomacy General: Gyeonggi Province, South Korea Pavilion
  - A gift from them for the International Peace Gardens because they are a Sister State.
  - Mortensen wants to make sure the University of Utah is included in the ceremony because they have a campus in that province.
- World Trade Center Utah
  - They are helping staff make economic, educational, and other connections in the Sister Cities.
  - Press conference happening in July
- Living Traditions Kick-Off Luncheon happening, and the board is all invited.
  - Point is to say that SLC is an international city.

### **Back to Previous Business Discussions**

- Staff would like support outlining what the pen pal program could be.
- Nicole has a contact for someone who wants to help with a student exchange program.
  - Matheson thinks that there could be support from the Salt Lake School Foundation.
  - Rose thinks that we should connect with Jennifer Newell, Mayor's Educational Advisor, about finding a high school who wants to do an exchange program with Torino Italy.
- Engaging the board, Motion made by Wilson to create an engagement sub-committee. Mortensen seconds. All in favor.
  - Committee consists of:
    - i. Stacey Adams
    - ii. John Wilson
    - iii. Mattie Mortensen
    - iv. Jane Kim

### **Briefings**

- Updates on Sister Cities:
  - Chernivtsi, Ukraine
    - i. Community and Art Exhibit
    - ii. Booth at World Refugee Day
    - iii. Ukrainian Independence Day
    - iv. Mayors met earlier this year and they plan on coming to visit the first two weeks of September.
    - v. Alan Lipp, the member of the public said that August Mission will be at Living Traditions as well and would also like to have him and his wife get involved with the pen pal program.
      1. Staff will reach out to him.
- Izhevsk, Russia
  - No updates
- Keelung, Taiwan
  - WTC had lots of contacts
- Matsumoto, Japan
  - Tabling at Matsumoto went VERY well. There are a lot of postcards to send to the city.
- Torino, Italy
  - Gallo has been working with the politecnico to create an educational exchange program with the U. But the U is ghosting us currently.
    - Chambless is willing to help nudge folks along.
- Trujillo, Peru
  - Staff has contact with their government.
  - There are some events that staff are working with the Consul General with.
    - They are looking for a location to host an art exhibition.

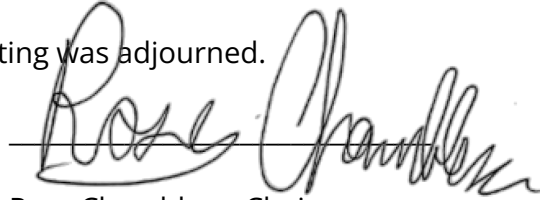
The board would like to get their minutes more in advance and send them to the Sister Cities to help show everything going on in SLC.

Mortensen has an idea to send Salt Lake "In a Box" to send to the Sister Cities.

**Adjournment:**

Wilson motions to adjourn. Chambless seconds. All are in favor of adjourning.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ross Chambless", 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 May 7, 2025.

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