



January 19, 2021

The Mayor's Sister City Advisory Board meeting was called to order by Mayor Fleetwood at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held remotely using Zoom meeting platform.

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## MINUTES

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**Unless noted, all officially appointed Sister Cities representatives were in attendance.**

Absent: Yoko Allen

**Staff attending:** Councilmember Pinky Vargas, 4<sup>th</sup> Ward; Brooksana Raney, Mayor's Executive Assistant

Current Sister Cities roster can be found on the City website:

[Sister Cities Advisory Board Roster - City of Bellingham, WA \(cob.org\)](https://www.cob.org/sister-cities)

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### Welcome

Ross Grier, BSCA President welcomed all.

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### Roll Call and Introductions

Since the presence of representatives may be seen on the screen, via the Zoom platform, this was skipped.

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### Approval of Agenda

- Ross proposed, Jeff second – all agreed
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### Approval of October 2020 minutes

- Ross, Steve second – all approved
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### Cheongju Craft Bienalle Artists - Kelly Hart, Allied Arts

- Had narrowed down to 4 artists who were chosen.
  - Last week learned we were not chosen to present.
  - Changes there and potential mis-communication.
  - Hope we can participate in coming years.
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## Council Representative

- Pinky Vargas, Council member of ward 4 is now our Council representative. This is her eighth year on council but never been involved with this board. She stated she used to travel for a living with the goal of traveling to a different country each year. She dreams of being a diplomat some day and traveling.
    - Bolor asked how many countries Councilmember Vargas has traveled.
      - Pinky is not sure and will give answer next meeting.
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## Sister Cities Reports

### Punta Arenas

- Aidan is no longer the chair but has taken over the position of secretary in BSCA. He has been in touch with P.A. and has passed over the work of connecting the breweries to Scott Blume.
- Two people are interested in joining the board. Ashley Buboski – has been responsible for the youth exchange part. Has attended some board meetings and several sister cities events. Second is a teacher, Mary Hooker – She’s interested (and Mary interested in taking the chair) and been involved with the youth exchange program as well.
  - For the moment they are not available but may be able to do so when resume face to face meetings.
- Information in Pt. Roberts was posted information about the Sister Cities and interested in membership.
- Ross asked how Aidan thought Mary and Ashley would work out as a part of the SC. Aidan feels they would be great.
- Not a lot of conversation with this city and we would have to go to the new administration to see if they would be amenable to having a video conference.

### Cheongju

- Binealle was one of the larger events we were planning to attend. Now looking at other options for activities. Looks like the pandemic may take longer and not allow much work.
  - Has always wanted to do something like this with our City.
- The question was asked if chairs, Council, Mayors and other city chairs who would like to attend a virtual meet up.
  - The group suggests doing one person at a time.
  - Perhaps a virtual meeting with all the Mayors as a meet and greet.
  - Ross suggested we start with Cheongju.
    - We may or may not need to have a translator. SoYoun will work on an outline to share. Will only be about 15 minutes.
  - Aidan suggested to do a monthly meeting (rotating) with each of the cities so we can focus on them. This may be something to do in future.
  - Lee and SoYoun will be chatting more, and she has offered to help with the meeting outline.
    - Lee stated its important to think about the goals/priorities for this relationship. Be reasonable and think about time use.
  - Steve asked if the Sister Cities presidents may be good to also have connect with each other.
    - Ross agreed this may be a good meeting to have – take it to the committee level.

### Vaassa

- Jeff contacted the four people Ross provided.
  - Tapio said he enjoyed going with Mayor, when was a Councilmember.
  - Lauren, from WWU education department, shared her pictures from her student teaching time. She's written to Sage, whose husband is a professor in Vaasa, but haven't heard back from her (Beer connection).
  - Will meet with Tapio to glean more information.
- Ross asked for the most recent email address for the Mayor or Vaasa so he may reach out.
- Chrystal will be putting up any pictures on the BSCA website of the Sister Cities.

### **Tsetserleg**

- Blue Sky gave scholarship to a student in a teachers college who has now completed her Masters.
- All was normal in Mongolia and now whole country is closed.
- Got a letter from the Governor of Arkhangai province, introducing himself since he is new.
- Also have a new Mayor.
  - Bolor will also reach out to the Mayor since he was her college friend.

### **Tateyama**

- No chair available.

### **Pt. Stephens**

- Received an email stating a docushare has been sent a request to open something. Steve will be contacting the rep to be sure he sent it and if he should open.
- Steve heard from sailing friend that COVID isn't too bad. Does have limited travel restrictions.

### **Nakhodka**

- Chair is vacant.
- Ross stated there has been some high level Russian academic scholarly level exchange of ideas. These are invitations for more high level discussion.
- Mayor and others sent a letter to request the Vladivostok consulate to remain open so that people in our Sister Cities and others around world have closer access to a consulate to request Visas.
- No news on this years' sailing exchange.

## **Old/New Business**

### **Reappointments**

- Both reappointments were agreed upon and now go to the Mayor for his approval and reappointment letter.

## Roll descriptions for Sister Cities representatives

- Ross is in the process of combining several roll positions for the board into a single document that speaks about time commitments and responsibilities.
- Many of you have seen these; it's taking info from the bylaws.
  - Want to have this done in time for our push to renew membership and find new volunteers.
  - Ross will send it to all for review.
- In the BMC, that's a city document and is the City Charter.
  - Not a long document but says there shall be an association that shall advise the Mayor on our relations and no more than 12 members.
    - We can do a work group for this.
- This is an opportunity to determine who else we need on our board to make it successful.
  - Aidan has worked on something like this in past and it would be great to have him involved.
- Ross said we need to clarify the number of the board members.
- Work group would be Ross, Jeff, Aidan, Brooksana, Jeremy.
- We will work on the discrepancy, how we can work together and define a common plan. Ross will be responsible for getting it off the ground.

## Peace Grant

- Jeremy presented the application which is mostly the same application with the addition of lining out what would be expected from the participant if they went.
  - Applications may also be mailed in, to allow more opportunity access.
  - Added the award amount (\$1,500 which is the typical amount).
    - It doesn't have to award if the group doesn't feel there is a quality applicant.
  - Winner will have to work with the board to determine if/how they have completed their requirement for the award.
  - They need to find a way to present their trip, either just to the board or in a public setting.
    - Still working on the letter for the winner but will essentially have the application information.
- Motion made by Aidan to approve the application as submitted by Jeremy.
- Seconded by Jeff. Motion passed.
- Thank you Jeff for all your work.

## Annual Report to City Council

- All requests for presentation need to go to Council Chair or and may go via Brooksana.
- It would be nice to send a New Year's message sent to the Sister Cities.
  - The Mayor and President Grier sent letters a few months ago.
- Brooksana suggested sending quarterly letters to the cities as a pen pal type of experience, in an effort to create more discussion.
  - Under 15 minutes, the simpler the better, especially on Zoom. Agendas are dynamic so it is possible it would be pushed – thank you for your flexibility.
  - Had very few presentations since doing meetings on Zoom just because most of our updates are on COVID, encampment, etc. and these are taking forefront.
- Ross asked if this needs to be done each year. Asked Pinky if she thinks it should be done.
  - She stated it's a hard thing to answer right now due to the flow of topics and meeting urgency.
  - Aidan would like to have it happen but understood the end of the year may be better. Pinky agrees and we hope we'll be able to offer a message of hope.

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**Announcements**

- A draft of membership form is ready for the BSCA.
    - Asked if anyone has comments to contact Ross by Friday, 1/22 at 5PM.
    - Once complete, will be sent to BR so it may be shared with the community about opportunity to be a member of the Association.
  - Aslan is making a Sister Cities beer
    - Crystal announced the BSCA is currently working on NP status.
    - Rather than posting just the letter for membership and Peace Grant, she will send graphic ready to post.
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Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM

**Next meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2021, at 5:30 p.m., via Zoom**