



## **REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS – Gwen Calhoun**

Gwen said City Council is looking at the budget right now, but there is not much to discuss. She said there isn't any room for new input as far as funding for projects. City Council is looking at prioritizing projects, but there are not any extra funds per the city manager.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Victoria Yarbrough**

Victoria said the Sister Cities International membership is included in the extras budget.

## **CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Treasurer's report and discussion – Randi Buros**

Randi is not present. Susanne said that \$5,625 is frozen in the account, but the commission should be able to open up the account and access the money at Navy Federal again after Randi picks up the 501(c)(3) applications on May 23<sup>rd</sup> in a week or two.

### **2. Buena Sister Cities Club Updates – Matthew Lentz**

Matthew said elections were held and Susanne's daughter was voted as President and Irma's daughter was voted as Vice President. Matthew said that a decision was made on trip attendees with a total of 8 students and 1 alternate. Susanne said that they have all been notified so that they can get moving on travel plans. One of the students' mothers wrote a letter requesting financial aid. She asked to make payments of \$50 a month. Susanne called Randi on the phone so that he could participate. Lauren and John want to help her. Lauren thought the student's interview was amazing. Susanne asked Victoria if the City could draw up a contract for a payment agreement. Susanne said that the commission gave \$250 to Jordan for the trip last year, but she doesn't know how much the tickets are going to be yet this year. Matthew said Lexi, the student in question, is active in the club. Victoria said there is \$200-\$250 in the donation account to front the cost until the commission can access a bank account. Matthew motioned that the commission give Lexi \$250 for her ticket and create a contract for repayment. John seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried. The end of the school year party for the club is a potluck this Friday at 3:00 p.m. The school refused to reimburse Matthew for the American students' tickets at Get Air in Tucson.

### **3. Discussion on establishing a 501(c)(3) organization – Randi Buros**

Randi was not present to report.

#### **4. Discussion on State Conference in October, 2017 – Milt Laflen**

Susanne moved this item to the end of the meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **1. Discussion on and election of Vice Chair – Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert**

Susanne tabled this item as it cannot be voted on without a quorum.

#### **2. Discussion on fund raising – Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert**

Susanne said that Randi wrote a letter from the commission to the rotary club requesting a grant. Lauren submitted it to the new president to be decided on in July. One of the students that went on the Germany trip has a parent with a hobby brewery. He works with Men Who Cook to do fundraisers like Relay for Life and he offered to host a fund raiser for the commission.

#### **3. After action report on the presentation to City Council and State Board Meeting – Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert**

Susanne said the presentation went well, she hopes. She said she was a little bit upset about a comment from the mayor about the Sister Cities commission not being necessary. Gwen believed he was joking. Susanne was still bothered by his implication of the commission's unimportance. Victoria believed the comment was not directed at the commission's mission or purpose, but rather, it was a joke in reference to the fact that the commission is forming a 501(c)(3) and Sister Cities will be two separate organizations. Susanne will try to get a copy of the minutes from the State Board meeting.

#### **4. Report on the donation account with the City and America Exchange Trip Expenses – Victoria Yarbrough**

Victoria said the last few items in April posted so the cost of the trip on the donation account was \$3,798.80. Gwen asked for clarification on who pays for the exchange trips. Susanne confirmed that the Sister Cities commission pays for the America exchange, and not the City of Sierra Vista, but the City of Radebeul pays for the Germany exchange trip. Victoria said that the City of Sierra Vista did pay for the bus and van expenses though. Milt asked how many students participate in the exchange. Susanne said 16 total students. 8 from us and 8 from Cananea go to Germany. 16 come to America. There is \$1,044.68 left in the account, but \$651 belongs to the Buena Club. Susanne asked if that included the German American Club check. Victoria confirmed that it already went in.

**5. Update on commission operating guidelines and manual on standard operating procedure – Victoria Yarbrough**

Victoria brought in a 2 page report for review if anyone wanted to see it. The major change was the term dates. All terms now end on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Any term currently ending before December 31<sup>st</sup> of a year, will be extended to the end of that year. Susanne went over current commissioner terms and Gwen, Victoria and Susanne discussed when commissioners should apply for reappointment. Victoria suggested November, Susanne recommended October and Gwen said that City Council may have a special session for reappointments due to the limited number of meetings at the end of the year.

**6. Discussion on All Commission Meet and Greets – John McBee**

John did not think it was the Landmark owner that created the rule stating non-paying customers could not attend. He was never able to confirm who made the decision, but wanted to say that it was wrong and that it should not be a stipulation of attending the meet and greets in the future.

**7. Discussion on June meeting – Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert**

Susanne asked if it was okay to skip the June regular meeting because there would be a couple of commissioners out of the country. She said if the commission needs to, they can add a special meeting at the end of June. There were no objections. The next meeting will be in July.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REQUESTS OF COMMISSIONERS**

Susanne asked Michael Boardman to introduce himself. He spoke about his self and his background. Matthew thanked Michael for taking the visiting German teachers on a tour of the border. He spoke of his wish to have teachers come from Mexico for guest lessons in Sierra Vista schools. Susanne was excited to welcome him to the commission. Matthew and Susanne wanted to add a vote to the next agenda to reimburse Matthew for Get Air. Victoria said that a vote is not necessary and she just needs his receipt.

**Discussion on State Conference in October, 2017 – Milt Laflen**

Milt introduced his wife Cheryl and Ellen Harrington, the treasurer for Sister Cities International. He made some copies and handed them out. Milt said he put some resource material in them from 4 prior State Conferences that he thought were pretty good. He said state conference is usually 60-80 people and it is pretty fun. People really look forward to it. He thinks it will be a great opportunity for people to get to experience Sierra Vista. Milt said that Sister Cities should start thinking about what is going on the flyers as far as the hotel and where they're going to meet. He said they also need to discuss what they're going to do, even if it seems early. In July there should be a finalized program and speakers lined up. At 9 or 10 weeks out, the commission and organization need to do outreach. Judy Hector, the marketing and public affairs manager, presented to the board last year to recommend Sierra Vista as a location and said that she is at

this meeting to help facilitate in any way that she can. John asked who actually sends out the flyers. Milt said that Sister Cities International puts it on the State website and puts it on their mailing list, but the commission puts the flyer together. Judy said that's where her team comes in. Susanne said the City will work on the hotels, etc. and that the commission needs to work on the agenda and work together with the city on the activities. Milt said that there's generally a program on Friday night for a meet and greet with hors d'oeuvres and an open bar. Susanne mentioned the brewing fundraiser beers and the observatory stargazing to showcase the city's extraordinary skies that night as a special touch. Milt said that it would be unique to have it at the observatory. Susanne said they had talked about doing campfires depending on the location. Michael said there are rooms for rent at the U of A south campus that would be of appropriate size. Susanne said that Patterson charges around \$400. Michael said that he could get around that as it is donation only, so it could be free. The rooms could even be as little as \$100. He said they've done that for Boy Scouts before. One issue is that alcohol is usually not permissible on the premises. They may change the rules for that. The foundation may waive fees for the publicity. Someone mentioned that there is a full moon the night prior to the event in discussion. The commissioners expressed concern about that problem and decided to do some more research on options. Having additional entertainment was another suggestion. Milt said in Prescott they had some local kids play mariachi music. Hank and Gwen suggested local entertainment from the schools as it doesn't need to be higher class. Susanne made some suggestions for performances. Susanne mentioned that the trip to Germany will probably take place around October 8<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup>. The State Conference will probably end on Saturday, but Milt will encourage people to stay Saturday night. Art in the Park is that weekend. Milt asked where the bird and butterfly reserve is. Matthew said Ramsey canyon is only about 25 minutes away. Mike said that Ft. Huachuca has a great museum and some of the best rock art in the state, but people often forget that it is a National Historic Landmark. Susanne said that one big thing the commission needs help from Milt with is putting together an agenda. He said there is a bit of a prototype for the agenda as it is basically the same every year. He said that doing everything the same is optional, but generally the meetings start on Saturday with a State Board meeting for the election of officers. It will probably only last about 30 minutes. After that, starting at 8:00, the programs could start around 9:00. The conference chair would say a few words on behalf of Sierra Vista and introduce the mayor who would speak to the group. Then, normally, there would be 4 break-out sections where people talk to each other to discover things they never thought of to bring back to the group. So, there would be 4 subjects and Milt was thinking that Sierra Vista might want to pick a subject indigenous to our area, like economic development between Cananea and Sierra Vista. John said that the cities that Sierra Vista works with are different than the cities the other groups work with and it's important to keep that in mind. Hank said that almost all of the Sister Cities work with Mexico though. Susanne said that overall, ideas about how to improve relationships between sister cities in America and Mexico would be an excellent topic. Gwen said that the Hispanic chamber of commerce is doing a lot to improve relationships between businesses, especially with language learning to be able to understand foreign shoppers. Susanne said that the commission should invite people from the Hispanic chamber of commerce to participate. Milt said that the commission should put together, staff and manage a 1 hour session. Milt said he will get Phoenix and Tempe to each do one session. The commissioners said that the last hour should be a discussion panel of Sister Cities best practice sharing, kind of like an update on what's working and things that they struggle with. Hank said that last year the cities with 501c3's had a membership organization to make the community aware of the non-

profit status and let them know donations are tax deductible. Susanne said that Sierra Vista needs some ideas because the budget is so stretched and Sister Cities is really competing for resources as it is. Milt said that in his experience, there are two types of organizations: commission and community types. The community types usually have 501c3's and, while some of the commission types don't, there are some that do. The difference isn't in the organization, but in the ability to get funding and that's always good. Milt wanted to talk about lunch. He said salads, sandwiches and taco bars work because people generally aren't too hungry. He said that 20 minutes of eating and presentation and 5 minutes of Q and A make it fairly light and easy and then lunch is done. The commissioners talked about speaker options. Milt asked Susanne to put selecting a lunch speaker on the agenda. Someone suggested using current and prior students as servers and greeters, because some of them need community service hours and that event is a great opportunity. Milt said there will be 2 sessions in the morning and 2 after lunch. Each session can consist of breakouts or panels or a combination within that hour. Susanne said that those details should be figured out by July 1<sup>st</sup>. She asked how many guest speakers are needed and Milt said one at lunch. He said that Sister Cities Sierra Vista also needs one educational program speaker and the Friday evening event. By September the commission and city will need to be serious about the financial organization, payments, website, hotel, food ordering, etc. Milt said that there is not a big budget for the state. The website costs a sixth of their budget. He said they give away \$400 to the sponsoring organization and will cut Sierra Vista a check, but the attendees' payments will be covering the rest of the expenses. At previous conferences the charge was \$60 per person plus a separate amount for Friday night's reception. Friday is the event where local people should be invited to socialize so that extra money can be made from people who won't attend the conference. It will also give attendees that aren't interested in coming on Friday evening a cheaper option to be able to attend the conference. Commissioners talked about other fundraising ideas like auctions and raffles. Milt mentioned hotel rates and confirmed that the Windamere is not an option. Hank said that Southeast Arizona Hospitality Organization has a hotel that they would like to be part of the event. Milt said that there are a bunch of subjects that he won't go through in the handout, but he touched on a couple ideas and made some recommendations, especially about involving the youth. Susanne suggested that was a dead end by saying that the young people aren't interested in anything because they are too attached to social media and video games. Commissioners discussed ideas amongst themselves. Susanne said that Judy will follow up with Cochise College and Mike will work on the observatory. Susanne suggested offering shuttle service. Irma said she will talk to a Cananea group about a dance performance for Friday night. Susanne expressed concern about their commitment as they cancelled at the last event an hour prior to the start. Milt said that the way that German students get to go to Cananea is really unique. Susanne said they should get together and discuss a presentation for the hour session and include the kids. Milt said most of the attendees will come to the Friday evening event, but it is important to get reservations coming in for planning. Milt said he would like to see the mayor of Douglas invited. They have a sister city that is East of Cananea. Milt has contact info for the Mayor of Nogales and Sahuarita. Milt would be happy to invite them, but believes it would be nice if something was written up for the Mexican Consul. Susanne said that someone should also invite the German Consul in Phoenix. Susanne asked for other invite ideas from Cananea. John Recommends Robert Carrera as a speaker. Commissioners talked about asking for baskets from local wineries. Susanne asked if the commission should put together bags. Commissioners recommended contents like flyers and brochures from the Chamber, University and other local places. Milt offered to come back.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

---

Susanne Himstedt-Gilbert, Chairperson