

# City of Clearwater

*City Hall  
112 S. Osceola Avenue  
Clearwater, FL 33756*



## Meeting Minutes

**Thursday, October 25, 2018**

**4:00 PM**

**Council Chambers**

## **Sister Cities Advisory Board**

## Roll Call

**Present** 4 - Acting Chair Hoyt Hamilton, Board Member Candace Hays, Board Member Pamela Gene Benton, and Board Member Michael Ballard

**Absent** 3 - Chair Terrence Gourdine, Vice Chair Sallie Parks, and Board Member Hannah Joseph

**Also Present** - Natalie Lamb – Volunteer and Environmental Lands Coordinator, Patricia O. Sullivan - Board Reporter

Awaiting approval

### 1. Call To Order

*Acting Chair Hamilton called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. at City Hall.*

To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

#### 2.1 Approve minutes from August 23, 2018 Special Sister Cities Advisory Board Meeting

*It was noted the amount of money CSCI (Clearwater Sister Cities, Inc.) raised and donated was misstated on pages 3 and 4; the correct amount was \$2,200.*

**Member Benton moved to approve minutes of the August 23, 2018 Sister Cities Advisory Board special meeting as corrected. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

### 3. Citizens to be Heard Regarding Items Not on the Agenda

*Visiting exchange teacher Takafumi Yamada said he taught English at Sabu High School in Nagano, Japan. He spoke about his itinerary visiting Pinellas County schools and experiences he had enjoyed at the schools and in Clearwater. He thanked the City for its kind, warm reception and the opportunity for him to visit as an exchange teacher. He said he was having a good time and appreciated the hospitality of the teachers and his host family.*

*Geri Craven said she was an exchange teacher in Nagano last year and discussed her experiences in Nagano and teaching at about 20 schools. She said the father of her host family was a Buddhist priest and they lived on the grounds of a Buddhist temple. She said Nagano residents were quite hospitable and she enjoyed her time there.*

### 4. New Business Items

#### 4.1 Discuss Bourges, France as a Potential New Sister City

*Volunteer and Environmental Lands Coordinator Natalie Lamb said the Deputy Mayor of Bourges, France had emailed the City expressing interest in forming a relationship with Clearwater. Monin, Inc., a Clearwater manufacturing firm with approximately 100 employees, was headquartered in Bourges. She had several conversations with the Deputy Mayor via phone and Skype. Bourges was interested in expanding its athletic, cultural, and business ties with Clearwater and establishing a connection between Bourges and Clearwater students via Skype and a student foreign exchange program.*

*Discussion ensued with comments that the City already had a significant financial commitment maintaining its long-term relationship with Nagano and that a relationship with Bourges may not require a financial commitment from the City. It was noted Bourges was rural, about 100 miles from Paris, and similar in size to Clearwater. Support was expressed for a Sister City relationship with Bourges. It was commented the current program was wonderful but limiting; adding Bourges would not diminish the City's relationship with Nagano but could increase community involvement with the City's Sister City program. It was stated a Sister City relationship with Bourges would benefit the Pinellas County school's French language program; Japanese was not taught. It was suggested a relationship with Bourges may open opportunities for French speaking students to intern at the Monin plant and encourage corporate interaction with Clearwater and Pinellas County schools. It was felt a corporate relationship with Bourges would be worth investigating once costs were identified. Bourges' expectations were questioned.*

*Ms. Lamb said she would discuss the concept with the Mayor and City Manager. Bourges was enthusiastic about developing a relationship with Clearwater.*

#### 4.2 Discuss Nagano High School visit in October 2018

*Ms. Lamb reviewed the itinerary for the 5 female Nagano high school students and teacher who arrived in Clearwater on October 20, 2018. During this visit, students spent more time at schools and interacting with their host families than touring the area. She invited members to attend the Sayonara party and thanked Member Benton for all of her work arranging school visits.*

*It was reported that language teachers reported having a great time with the students and Countryside High School students were excited about their interactions. It was stated several Japanese students attended Countryside's Homecoming Dance with their teacher acting as chaperone. It was noted the exchange program resulted in lasting friendships.*

#### 4.3 Discuss Nagano Middle School visit in February, 2019

*Ms. Lamb said Nagano Middle School students will visit Clearwater from February 8 to 13, 2019. Staff will reach out to the community for homestay families. Members were invited to the Sayonara party.*

*Ms. Lamb said it was unlikely future Middle School student visits could be scheduled in the fall or combined with High School student visits. Concern was expressed it had become harder to attract Young Ambassador participants; a fall visit from Nagano would promote the program and encourage more students to apply; applications were due prior to February visits. It was noted only one Sayonara party would be needed if Nagano Middle and High School students visited at the same time. It was stated that exchange students bonded with their foreign counterparts and it was hoped that Young Ambassador families would host visiting students.*

*Concern was expressed it already was difficult to attract host families for separate visits. It was stated that schools were busy in October with magnet fairs and thespian festivals and schools would not host visiting students when testing preparation and testing were underway. It was questioned if parents of high school foreign exchange students would be willing to host visiting students after their own children had graduated and left home. It was recommended that Young Ambassador host families be identified before scheduling changes were considered*

*Ms. Lamb said she was the only staff member working on Sister City visits. The logistics of hosting Middle and High School students at the same time would be difficult to plan and manage.*

#### 4.4 Discuss Council visit to Nagano in October 2019

*Ms. Lamb said the City Council's visit to Nagano and Japan was tentatively scheduled for October 18 – 27, 2019. She will share information about ticket prices and the itinerary when it becomes available. Delegation members will represent Clearwater and need to travel together and participate in all scheduled meetings and events. She asked Board members interested in joining the trip to contact her. CSCI representatives could participate in an official capacity; the trip was not open to the public. Additional information will be presented at the next meeting.*

#### **5. Old Business Item:** None.

#### **6. Director's Report**

*Board Member/CSCI Representative Hays thanked Ms. Lamb for scheduling the Young Ambassadors at a City Council meeting. She expressed concern the Proclamation did not include requested language recognizing CSCI as a City sanctioned program. Ms. Lamb said the City was provided the CSCI*

*language; the Mayor wrote the Proclamation.*

*It was noted CSCI had been recognized as a City sanctioned program even though the Proclamation did not include that language.*

*Ms. Hays reported CSCI raised less money this year than last year at their annual Hamburger Mary event. She said CSCI had discussed asking the City to match the organization's fundraising efforts. She suggested leftover money budgeted for the high school trip could be used for Young Ambassadors' scholarships. She reported the recycling perks program had ended.*

*It was suggested Ms. Lamb could check if the recycling perks program would reopen.*

## **7. Board Members to be Heard**

*Member Benton said interviews were scheduled for next year's teacher exchange program to Nagano. She said costs incurred by participants limited the number of potential applicants.*

*Concerns were expressed re Chair Gourdine's absence. It was requested that staff check on him.*

## **8. Adjourn**

*The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.*

Attest:

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Chair - Sister Cities Advisory Board

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Board Reporter