



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Approved SISTER CITY COLLABORATION COMMITTEE

*Consider: Who benefits? Who is burdened?
Who does not have a voice at the table?
How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?*

Monday, May 5, 2025

5:30 PM

Pinney Library
516 Cottage Grove Rd
Madison, WI 53716

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 9 - Frank L. Alfano; Josephine H. Oyama-Miller; Carolyn A. Gantner; Charles J. James; Jon F. Heinrich; Salvador A. Carranza; Bill Tishler; Sarah J. Warner and Rahel Desalegne

Absent: 1 - Daina P. Zemliauskas-Juozevicius

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Oyama-Miller, seconded by Warner, to approve the minutes from the March 3, 2025 Sister City Collaboration Committee meeting. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. [70299](#) Public Comment

There was no public comment.

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

No disclosures or recusals.

REGULAR BUSINESS REPORTS

2. [88092](#) Sister City Program Reports - May 2025

Mantova, Italy (Frank Alfano) -- Alfano reported that 10-12 years ago, the Madison-Mantova group participated in a week-long conference on water and the environment. Mantova, like Madison, is surrounded by lakes, but has bad water quality. The issue is now being picked up again, and members of the group are helping make a video on Madison lakes with the UW. Planned trips between the two cities have been cancelled due to the political climate in the US, with the group opting for a "wait and see" approach.

Bahir-Dar, Ethiopia (Rahel Desalegne) -- Desalegne reported that conflict in the region of Ethiopia near Bahir-Dar continues to prevent the Madison-Bahir-Dar

group from being active, but the latest word is that rebels in the area are disbanding, so that may soon change. The group did meet recently, and are looking into adding more members.

Freiburg, Germany (Charles James) -- James reported that students from West High School in Madison will be visiting Freiburg in June, with Freiburg high school students planning to make a return visit in September, and the possibility of one-to-one exchanges in the future via sister schools. James also let the committee know that he will be stepping down from his place on the committee after the June meeting, and introduced his replacement from the Madison-Freiburg group--Jo Drury.

Obihiro, Japan (Jo Oyama-Miller) -- Oyama-Miller reported that there is a tentative delegation from Madison to Obihiro being discussed, to coincide with and celebrate the 20th anniversary of the sister city relationship between the two cities, with a tentative visit from Obihiro's mayor to Madison in November. She also reported that student exchange groups between the two cities are pending due to concern from Obihiro schools about students' safety in the US; they would like to see safety measures codified. The group has also recently discussed comparisons between indigenous peoples in Japan and Wisconsin.

Camaguey, Cuba (Jon Heinrich) -- Heinrich reported that despite wider travel to Cuba being eliminated by Pres. Trump, the Madison-Camaguey group is still able to send down medical goods through the Wisconsin Medical Project, and are considering a limited-group medical mission, potentially including Heinrich, in August.

Arcatao, El Salvador (Carolyn Gantner) – Gantner reported that six members of the Madison-Arcatao group recently attended a rally to support immigrants at the state Capitol. The delegation that visited Arcatao recently will report back to the group on their trip in August.

Tepatitlán, Mexico (Salvador Carranza) – Carranza reported that last year, the Madison-Tepatitlán group were planning to bring a theatre group from Tepatitlán to Madison, but ultimately the theatre group was unable to make the trip due to logistical issues, including a lack of phones. This year however, the Madison-Tepatitlán group will have a couple of fundraising events to be able to help them come. They are also looking at grant possibilities.

Alder Tishler also introduced himself, and the members of the committee introduced themselves to him and spoke briefly about the sister city organizations they represent.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. [88094](#) Meeting Mode

The committee members discussed whether the committee should meet in-person or virtually in June and July. Carranza moved, and Alfano seconded, that the committee meet in-person for June and July, and then meet via Zoom for September 2025 - April 2026. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

4. [88093](#) Chair and Vice Chair Election

Alfano nominated Carranza for chair and Desalegne for vice chair. Oyama-Miller seconded the nominations. Both nominees were then elected unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

James made, and Warner seconded, a motion that the meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm.