



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, September 8, 2025

5:30 PM

Virtual

Call to Order/Roll Call

- Present:** 8 - Frank L. Alfano; Josephine H. Oyama-Miller; Daina P. Zemliauskas-Juozevicius; Jo E. Drury; Salvador A. Carranza; Sarah J. Warner; Rahel Desalegne and Jennifer C. Johnson
- Excused:** 3 - Carolyn A. Gantner; Jon F. Heinrich and Bill Tishler

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Oyama-Miller, seconded by Warner, to approve the minutes from the June 2, 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.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Regular Business Reports

2. [89740](#) Sister City Program Reports - September 2025

Bahir Dar, Ethiopia (Rahel Desalegne) -- Desalegne reported that Ethiopia has a new dam to prevent flooding and supply energy. She is hopeful that this will be good for Bahir Dar in many important, if not direct, ways.

Vilnius, Lithuania (Daina Zemliauskas-Juozevicius) -- Zemliauskas-Juozevicius reported that the Madison-Vilnius group held its annual summer picnic on Sept 6.

Mantova, Italy (Frank Alfano) -- Alfano confirmed that the Madison-Mantova group will conduct no visits to Mantova this year due to US politics, and that the same is true for Mantova's other sister cities

Obihiro, Japan (Jo Oyama-Miller) -- Oyama-Miller reported that the trip to Obihiro with Mayor Rhodes-Conway in July was a success. A corresponding trip delegation of 15 from Obihiro to Madison is being planned, including a variety of activities, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the relationship between the two sister cities. It will include an event on Nov 17th, invitations to which Oyama-Miller said are coming soon.

Cusco, Peru (Jennifer Johnson) -- The Madison-Cusco group has a trip to Cusco planned in May of 2026, which will be a joint trip with Engineers without Borders from UW-Madison. The group also participated in a Spirit Walk for Water, 18 miles long, that raised about \$2700 in support of a water distribution project with Cusco.

Freiburg, Germany (Jo Drury) -- Drury reported that Charles James has been at Farmer's Market booth every Saturday of the season for the Freiburg-Madison group. Many people who stop by the booth don't know that Madison even has sister cities. The group's Vice President, a German teacher at West High, is hosting students coming over from Freiburg with his students for about 2 weeks; and taking West High students over to visit Freiburg next summer.

Tepatitlán, Mexico (Salvador Carranza) – Carranza reported that he is creating a gmail (madtepa@gmail.com) account and workspace on Google for the Madison-Tepatitlán group. The group is also working on partnerships to bring a Tepatitlán theater group to visit and perform in Madison and a partnership with LOUD to promote Latin American art. The group's planned trip to Tepatitlán in April had to be postponed; it will now take place at the end of October, and will include a Dia de los Muertos celebration.

Items for Possible Action

3. [89737](#) Current and Future Funding

Staffperson D'Costa working on disbursements for 2026, tentatively same as this year, \$30,000. Oyama-Miller had mentioned increasing funds to the Mayor, but D'Costa reported that Room Tax funds are down, which might make that difficult. Oyama-Miller proposed a work group, and D'Costa proposed that it be one and the same as the previously proposed Public Relations work group.

4. [89739](#) Succession Planning

Carranza reiterated his proposed succession plan, as follows: In addition to the Chair and Vice Chair a role of "2nd Vice Chair" would be established, and the first 2nd Vice Chair elected. Then, at the end of each term (one year), the committee member who was serving as the Chair would step down, the committee member who was serving as the Vice Chair would assume the role of Chair, and the committee member who was serving as the 2nd Vice Chair would assume the role of Vice Chair.

Chairperson D'Costa informed the committee that she had checked with the Office of the City Attorney and confirmed that there was no problem with this setup.

The plan was established to vote on confirming this succession plan at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Johnson made, and Alfano seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:09 pm.