



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 4, 2026

5:30 PM

Virtual

Interpretation and Accessibility

Call to Order/Roll Call

Present: 10 - James R. LeTourneau; Josephine H. Oyama-Miller; Carolyn A. Gantner; Jo E. Drury; Jon F. Heinrich; Salvador A. Carranza; Bill Tishler; Rahel Desalegne; Alieu Jallow and Jennifer C. Johnson

Absent: 1 - Daina P. Zemliauskas-Juozevicius

Excused: 1 - Sarah J. Warner

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Oyama-Miller, seconded by Heinrich, to approve the minutes from the April 6, 202 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

There were no disclosures or recusals.

Announcements

Staff-person Faultersack reminded the committee members that the committee's upcoming June meeting will be held in-person at the Sequoya branch of Madison Public Library.

Regular Business Reports

2. [92846](#) Sister City Program Reports - May 2026

Obihiro, Japan (Jo Oyama-Miller) – Oyama-Miller reported that the election in Obihiro in April resulted in the incumbent mayor losing his position. On the national level, Japan is restricting travel visas for students and others. But the Madison-Obihiro group was approved to bring four Madison students to Obihiro in July. The group will be a vendor at a symphony on June 10-11 at the Overture Center, and will be bringing special music-themed origami.

Mantova, Italy (Jim LeTourneau) – LeTourneau reported that he is researching a concern about microplastics voiced by his counterparts in Mantova. They are also wondering about student exchanges, including the possibility of a five-week study abroad program. The Madison-Mantova group is waiting to hear if Madison Mayor Satya-Rhodes-Conway will visit Mantova after her upcoming visit to Freiburg.

Rahel Desalegne (Bahir Dar) – Desalegne reported that the Madison-Bahir-Dar group is trying to reestablish the sister city relationship from the Bahir-Dar side.

Freiburg, Germany (Jo Drury) – Drury reported that the Madison-Freiburg group has some members getting ready to go to Freiburg in June; they will be joining Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway's delegation.

Kanifing, The Gambia (Alieu Jallow) – Jallow reported that the Madison-Kanifing group recently hosted a gala, with many memories made.

Camaguey, Cuba (Jon Heinrich) – Heinrich reported that situation in Cuba remains disastrous with fuel blocked by the current US administration, causing blackouts. Mexico tried to get fuel through, but was not allowed.

Cusco, Peru (Jennifer Johnson) – Johnson reported that the Madison Cusco Sister City Alliance and Mundo Esperanza are jointly putting on a traditional Pachamanca experience to honor Harry Whitehorse on June 20th as part of a larger festival. They will also be hosting a Spirit Walk for Water, with proceeds to go to support a clean water project for Tomocaya, Peru. On April 25th had partnership in Gov Dodge state park.

Arcatao, El Salvador (Carolyn Gantner) – Gantner reported that the delegation sent to Arcatao in April had a wonderful and meaningful time. Numerous celebratory events were held, and Arcatao officials were thrilled to receive the proclamation from Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, and sent gifts back as well. The Madison-Arcatao group's umbrella organization is visiting Philadelphia, but will come to Madison first (along with visiting other El Salvador sister cities in the United States). A member of the umbrella group's Directiva (governing body) may be able to come as well. The event celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the sister city relationship between Arcatao and Madison is being moved from October up to August at Aubergine. Some students from Madison's West High are going to Arcatao in June; members of the Madison-Arcatao group will meet with them and their parents to share information.

Tepatitlán, Mexico (Sal Carranza) – Carranza reported that the Madison-Tepatitlán group's plan for a student exchange trip to Tepatitlán for this year had to be postponed to next year. In the meantime, they are making progress on preparing programs for Tepatitlán summer camps. The principle

of the school in Tepatitlán is also preparing. The likely order is that Madison students will travel to Tepatitlán first, then vice versa.

Items for Possible Action

3. [92847](#) PR Work Group Report

Sarah Warner, who the Public Relations Work Group designated to share the report, was unable to attend the meeting. Staffperson Faultersack passed on some basic information from her in her absence. The report was referred to the next meeting in June.
4. [92848](#) Celebration Event Subcommittee Report

Heinrich reported on the first meeting of the subcommittee. Previous iterations of the event had been held in 2018 and 2019, then stopped because of COVID-19. There were over 200 participants at each of those events, and all sister cities participated, each with their own informational tables. Each group put in \$500, and they also had donors.

The subcommittee is looking at late spring of 2027, after the next Mayoral election in mid-April 2027. They are also looking into the availability of the same location, at Madison College. Their next meeting is scheduled to be May 14th.

Entertainment options and focus on highlighting specific cities or regions was also discussed.
Oyama-Miller made a motion for the subcommittee to continue with plans for the event and Drury seconded. Unanimously approved.
5. [92507](#) Code of Conduct

Alder Tishler gave information and explanation about the Elected and Appointed Official Code of Conduct. There is an emphasis on speaking and treating fellow committee members, media, and City staff with respect. Disciplinary actions in case of misconduct were also outlined.

Staffperson D'Costa reminded the committee that they need to review the Code of Conduct annually.
6. [92947](#) July Meeting Location

Multiple potential in-person locations for the July meeting were discussed. LeTourneau will look into the availability of the Italian Workmen's Club.

Adjournment

Gantner made, and Heinrich seconded, a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:23 PM.