



# City of Madison

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
www.cityofmadison.com

## 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?*

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Monday, April 6, 2026

5:30 PM

Virtual

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### Call to Order/Roll Call

- Present:** 9 - James R. LeTourneau; Josephine H. Oyama-Miller; Carolyn A. Gantner; Daina P. Zemliauskas-Juozevicius; Jo E. Drury; Jon F. Heinrich; Salvador A. Carranza; Sarah J. Warner and Alieu Jallow
- Absent:** 2 - Bill Tishler and Jennifer C. Johnson
- Excused:** 1 - Rahel Desalegne

### Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Gantner, seconded by Drury, to approve the minutes from the February 2nd, 2026 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

Chair Carranza welcomed new committee members Alieu Jallow and Jim LeTourneau.

### Regular Business Reports

2. [92506](#) Sister City Program Reports - April 2026  
Obihiro, Japan (Jo Oyama-Miler) – High school students from Obihiro visited Madison March 6-16. One of the teachers unfortunately experienced a cute illness which delay his return to Japan. Oyama-Miller was able to help out with hospital billing (due to lack of insurance coverage), but the incident raises

questions about how such situations should be handled.

**Camaguey, Cuba (Jon Heinrich)** – Heinrich reported that Madison-Camaguey group member Ricardo traveled to Camaguey and just returned, relaying the disastrous conditions of Cuba without power.

**Arcatao, El Salvador (Carolyn Gantner)** -- Gantner reported that the Madison-Arcatao group's visit to Arcatao is ongoing now, taking with them a proclamation from the Madison mayor's office, translated to Spanish. There was a recent corresponding visit to the Madison mayor's office, which included a photo op with Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway. The group will have a follow up discussion when they get back from Arcatao. West High students plan to visit Arcatao in June; the group is evaluating the travel risks.

**Vilnius, Lithuania (Daina Zemliauskas-Juozevicius)** – The Madison-Vilnius group celebrated Lithuanian Independence Day on February 17. Mayor Valdas Benkuskas of Vilnius and his delegation visited Madison, met Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway and toured Madison's Bus Rapid Transit. The group also has their annual banquet upcoming at Madison Club on May 2, which will include Lithuanian musicians performing live.

**Freiburg, Germany (Jo Drury)** – The Madison-Freiburg group held their annual meeting on March 15 at Essen Haus. They have a flyer with all of Madison's sister cities mentioned, which they handed out at the year's first Farmers' Market.

**Kanifing, The Gambia (Alieu Jallow)** – The tenth anniversary of the Madison-Kanifing sister city relationship is coming up on April 18th. Lord Mayor Bensuda of Kanifing will be in Madison briefly; he has also created a political party and is running for president of The Gambia.

**Mantova, Italy (Jim LeTourneau)** – LeTourneau reported that he met the mayor (and staff) of Mantova on a small visit with a colleague. The current Mantova mayor will not be in office next year, and the election is coming up this summer. LeTourneau also reported that the main problem in Mantova is water pollution, especially plastics in the river.

**Tepatitlan, Mexico (Sal Carranza)** – Carranza reported that the Madison-Tepatitlan group was going to send a group of students to Tepatitlan as usual, but due to unfortunate circumstances with cartels in the area (nearby Talisco), they had to cancel their plans. They are hoping for a trip next year instead.

### Items for Possible Action

3. [92507](#) Code of Conduct

Chair Carranza asked for a motion to refer the item to the May meeting because Alder Tishler, a crafter of the Code of Conduct was unable to attend, and Carranza and staffperson D'Costa intended the committee to discuss the item with the help of his expertise. Oyama-Miller moved and Heinrich seconded. The motion was approved and the item referred.

4. [92508](#) PR Work Group Report

Sarah Warner shared about the website survey created after discussion in the Public Relations Work Group. (See attached) Other topics included best practices, marketing tips, etc.

5. [92509](#) International Festival

The committee members who were able to attend the International Festival agreed that overall, some improvements were made. The music was not as loud, and engagement was better. A second table was needed, however; hopefully Overture can supply this next time. The space was also a big improvement.

### Adjournment

Heinrich made, and Oyama-Miller seconded, a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:17 PM.