

Sister Cities of Durham Board of Directors Meeting
Approved Minutes June 12, 2025, Recity Network, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m and via Zoom.

Call to Order at 7:08pm

Attendance: Nancy Cox, Randy Griffin, Patricia Sheppard, Eve Marion, Carolina Vera, John Felheim, Gwenn Bookman, Mark Goodwillie, Katie Vanhoy, Violet Evans, Min Shu, Salma Rashid, Zenani Fogg, Susanna Ochala

Guests: Tom Harris, Jim Force

Quorum: 11 with 3 board members joining during the meeting

Review Agenda

Approval of Minutes May 8, 2025

Eve Marion moved to accept the minutes.

Randy Griffin seconded.

Unanimously approved.

Board Chair Remarks:

- New Board member Introduction and goal committee co chair announcement
 - Violet Evans, new co chair of Kunshan committee shared the following: I am a Biostatistician for the Federal Government, the Department of Veterans Affairs. I have a background in math statistics and Chinese from UNC Chapel Hill, and completed a 1 year master's in analytics at NC State. I did spend a year in China, in between high school and my freshman year of college. This is a great opportunity to continue to spread cultural awareness and just foster dialogue. So I'm happy to be here.
 - James Long, new co-chair of Kunshan. Mr. Long was not present.
 - Carolina Vera is now filling the role as Chair of the Celaya committee. Elsa Jimenez has stepped down; Ms. Jimenez was accepted to Law School at NCCU and was pleased that her co-chair, Ms. Vera, was willing to take on the leadership of the committee.
 - Sue Mathias, a former Board member and President of SCD, has agreed to be the co-chair of the Finance committee alongside Mark Goodwillie.
- We have not yet had anyone sign up to help with this task of establishing guidelines for the use of the youth scholarship funds; this need will be revisited by the Executive committee.
- An update was provided regarding the Washington, DC, 2 night get a way Fundraiser and Board members were encouraged to continue to share the raffle with their network.

- An update on the invitation to Rick Steves to come to the Triangle was provided; it turns out he is already coming to Raleigh to Meymandi in Raleigh with the NC Symphony - November 6 and 7th - ticket information was shared.
- The Youth Survey continues to receive input and was opened up to adults as well as teens.
- The following information was shared regarding events from Sister Cities International:
 - SCI Summer Leadership and Annual Business Meeting will be in Fort Worth, TX July 21-23rd. Japanese US SCI Summit September 16-19 in Osaka
 - The World Expo will be Osaka through October 13, 2025
 - The "I like Ike" fundraising campaign to support the Youth Leadership Summit is active now.
 - President Cox shared information about a program that brings young professionals from other countries to work on a special project for a US company. SCD can be a partner, the program is IREX. This is a project SCD will consider next year.
- On behalf of Chris Boyer, Chair of the Toyama Committee and SCD Vice President, President Cox shared that two members of the Toyama committee will participate in the Nippon Club of the Triangle Festival at the end of June.
- On behalf of the Peace Grove Chair, Mike Shiflett, Chris President Cox shared that a request for tree watering volunteers will go out as needed based on the summer weather.

Treasurer Remarks:

- An update on the Reimbursement Request with the City of Durham was shared by Treasurer, Min Shu. Changes in what SCD can request for reimbursement now include personnel expenses; given this change, a new request was submitted to the City; we are waiting to hear from the City.
- A reminder was shared that 4th Quarter and year end reports are coming this summer and that all expenses have to be accounted for by the end of June.

Financial Report:

- Dues and Donation Report was not provided, however information was shared by President Cox regarding updates made to the list of current members.
- The approved Budget FY 25/26 (Fiscal year (FY) begins on July 1, 2025 and ends on June 30, 2026) was shared.

City Committee Reports: (3 minutes each)

Celaya - Carolina Vera, Chair, provided the report. This summer marks 16 years of dental charity work in Mexico. Partnering now with the University in Celaya so the patients can have good follow up care. She is expanding the partnerships with Universities this year; she has 3 and last

year she had two. Ms. Vera is meeting with City representatives, this will be the first official visit with Celaya in a long time. She will also be visiting a school! July 23-25th.

Kavala - Randy Griffin, Chair, provided the report. Unfortunately the committee has not been in communication with the government since December 3, they are not answering any emails. 3 members of the committee there have met with the Mayor. Because of the financial situation in the Country, there are challenges in supporting the sister city relationships. They have 5 sister cities but apparently they have dropped their relationships. They have been so gracious when SCD has made visits; they worry that those costs have become a barrier. The hope remains that we can bring the two youth members with whom they have established a relationship from past visits to visit Durham.

Durham - Eve Marion, co-chair provided the report. The 2nd Pub Night is scheduled for June 18th at 6pm at the Bull City Solera and Tap Room - this is a brewery that participated in the former Two Durham Beer Festival. It is a laugh and learn, Durham Trivia with a prize from the brewery. Also, the Washington, DC raffle will be held live at 7pm.

Ms. Marion shared that Brian Stobie, who was the primary contact for Durham, UK, retired and they transferred responsibility to Visit Durham (Visitor's Bureau). The new contact appears open to continuing the relationship. In October, a small, fact finding, goodwill trip is being planned to forge new relationships. During the trip, the delegation will visit the breweries who participated in the Two Durham Beers Festival.

Zhuzhou - Mark Goodwillie, co-Chair, presented. The 1000 Mile Initiative is partnering for a trip of 10 students to Zhuzhou that is taking place this month.

July 7-9th, a delegation of 4 government officials are coming here from Zhuzhou; their focus is economic development and student exchanges.

Arusha - Gwenn Bookman, chair, presented. Swahili lessons are wrapping up at Afrikikos. The owner (Gwenn's sister), Beverly McLaughlin, is pleased to continue opening the bistro for another upcoming session.

Goals Committee Reports: Governance - Chair Tom Harris and Guest Jim Force

- Bylaw Amendment - Change from, members electing Board members, to the sitting Board electing Board members

This topic was postponed due to time constraints.

- Policy Addition - Definition of "Active City Committee" as it relates to receipt of funding from the City of Durham Disbursement.

This topic was postponed due to time constraints.

- Memorandum to the SCD Board of Directors from the Governance Committee regarding A Bylaws section whose meaning is in dispute - Article VI, Board of Directors, Section 2: Number, Terms and Election, a. Number, I

Board delineate plan of action based on outcome of discussion.

The Governance committee presented two different interpretations of our bylaws regarding how many Board members make up the SCD Board. After hearing from the Governance committee, President Cox led the Board in a full discussion of this topic. While no official action was taken, there was consensus that the work for this Board is to decide on the following: how many board members do we want to have; who are these board members; how will they be elected. This work will be taken back up at the September meeting. While the Board would like resolution, the election for new Board members, who are not city committee chairs, will occur at the October Annual meeting of the membership of the organization - it may not be possible to complete the work prior to the required 30 day notification of that meeting which means the Board will continue with the interpretation that the Board is made up of city committee chairs and between 9 and 13 board members who are elected by the membership of SCD at the Annual meeting held in October.

Fundraising, Marketing and Membership Committee (Outreach and Engagement)

- Adoption of SCD Volunteer Handbook - Patricia Sheppard, Chair of Membership

Motion to adopt the SCD Volunteer Handbook:

This work was postponed due to time constraints.

Youth Committee Report - Patricia Sheppard, Chair, presented. Ms. Sheppard shared that a student, Cora Williamson, will be participating in the SCI Youth Leadership Summit. She complimented Cora and another student, Noelani Green, who were exemplary members of the youth committee advisory group that met this past spring developing the survey and sharing their thoughts on the best path forward for an SCD youth committee.

New City Report - no report

Technology - no report

Peace Grove - see comments above.

Unfinished Business:

- Payment for Interim Office Manager
 - Suggest lifetime membership in lieu of \$200 payment

Motion to extend lifetime membership to Leslie Fischer in recognition for her service as our volunteer Officer Manager in 2024/25.

This issue was not discussed due to time constraints.

New Business:

Google drive update - President Cox shared that additional progress has been made setting up organization emails for Board members and organizing folders and files. There is more work to be done before the drive is fully operational.

Action Items:

- Promote the upcoming events
- Work on updating your list of youth with whom you are currently working and with whom you have worked with in the recent past
- Update your committee membership list
- Finalize plans for your program and exchange (virtual or in person) in program year July 2024 through June 2025
- Solidify plans for program and exchanges beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026
- Encourage your committee members to pay dues
- Peruse the Sister Cities International Website

Announcements:

- Video to Wedding Group in Zhuzhou(link coming)

Adjournment: 8:41pm**2025 Retreat and Meeting dates:**

Saturday, January 25th (Planning Retreat)

March 13 changed to March 6

May 8

June 12 (May 29th Board materials provided)

September 11 (August 28th Board materials provided)

October TBD (Annual Meeting)

November 13 (October 30th Board materials provided)