

**Sister Cities of Durham Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom
Minutes March 6, 2025 Zoom 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.**

7:06pm Call to Order

Attendance: Nancy Cox, Chris Boyer, Gwenn Bookman, Patricia Sheppard, Susanna Ochala, Alma Reynaga, Eve Marion, Leslie Fishcher, Mitch Scurtu, Elsa Jimenez, Carolina Vera

Review of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

November 7, 2025 (Did not include closed meeting minutes)

Motion was made by Chris Boyer

Seconded by Susanna Ochala

September 5th (the Secretary, during the November 7th meeting, failed to record who made and who seconded the motion to approve the minutes)

Corrections made: Griffith to Griffin

Motion was made by Susanna Ochala

Seconded by PatriciaSheppard

Unanimous

Nomination and Vote for new at-large member of the Board of Directors

Board member, Gwenn Bookman, shared information on the Nominations Committee to welcome, Alma Reynaga, to the Board of Directors of SCD.

Motion made to accept the nomination by Eve Marion

Second by PatriciaSheppard

Unanimous approval

Board Chair Remarks were made

- Toyama visitor recap - President Cox thanked the Glass Jug, our host for the in kind contribution of space and for waiving the bar minimum -this was a fun and relaxing space for our meet and greet. Mayor Willilams attended and everyone enjoyed interacting with the Mayor. Several guests participated in the snack off and as did the Japanese students. President Cox thanked Leslie Fischer for promoting the event via social media.
- Dates of upcoming programs - President Cox prefaced the reminder of upcoming events with comments to the Board regarding their responsibility to share out the programming of the organizations with their networks.
 - The Art of Feng Shui presented by Zhuzhou Committee
 - Saturday, March 15 2pm Stanford L Warren Library
 - Women's History Event with Durham County Women's Commission
 - Monday, March 24th 5:30pm Main Branch Library
- President Cox shared that completion of the Google Drive is slow going and will probably not be fully accessible to the Board until June.
- Board Contact information - President Cox asked Board members to update their contact information

- City Committee Members contact list -President cox asked Board members to update the list of their committee members
- President Cox announced the SCI Spring Board meeting in Washington, DC March 13-15th
- President Cox shared an update on the Project to bring Rick Steves to the Triangle. We are joining with Raleigh and Cary and working with the State SCI Rep. Identifying a location, and sponsors is the main priority to see if it is feasible to enter into a contract with Rick Steves.
- President Cox shared the updated Interim Office Manager task list. The new title of this position is Organizational Assistant.

Vice President Report on Recent budget meeting with Representatives of the Mayor's and City Managers Offices and the City Clerk

- VP Boyer shared the background leading to a meeting with the representatives from the Mayor and Manager's Office. The Executive Committee submitted a budget request to the City in January. The City requested a meeting. The Executive Committee members met with the City. Their request to SCD is to consider ways to get the most value from City funds-discussion revolved around these topics:
 - Budget FY 2026 (starts July 1, 2025 and ends June 30th 2026)
 - VP Boyer shared that the City has requested that we vacate our current office space; they need the space for staff.
 - Meeting Room Space Alternatives to meeting in City were discussed because the City currently has to pay for security when we have our after hours meetings.
 - ReCity (where the annual retreat was). President Cox shared the benefits of working out of Recity which include: work space, mailbox, one after hour meeting per month, copying.
 - Parks and Recreation Center - VP Boyer has made preliminary contacts and will be confirming whether we qualify for a fee waiver.
 - VP Boyer invited other suggestions be sent by email.
 - Mail Box - perhaps use the City's mail room instead of the Post Office Box at the Downtown Post Office
 - Storage - perhaps find space within the City
 - Request that SCD provide an inventory of current storage facility
 - Request that SCD provide a picture inventory of our Art and artifacts gifted to SCD/Durham City by our Sister Cities with the goal of displaying the art in Durham City Public Buildings.

Treasurer Report:

- In the absence of Treasurer, Min Shu, President Cox shared the report and emphasized the importance that Board members understand these reports as part of their financial oversight of the organization. The report included a review of the list of reimbursable expenses to the City. She also shared the 2024 reimbursement request which was made in December 2024 and noted that the reimbursement actually came in January 2025.
- President Cox shared an overview of the current tasks performed by the Bookkeeper and shared why the Executive Committee is looking into expanding the role of the Bookkeeper. She shared that the committee has talked with a current CPA who works with nonprofits and an online company which would be a similar cost. She noted that one benefit of the change would be that the Office Manager would now no longer have any financial responsibilities. The Executive

Committee will be making a formal recommendation to increase the hours of the Bookkeeper and welcomes feedback from Board members.

Financial Report

The following information was shared with the Board by President Cox in the absence of Treasurer Min Shu.

- Quarterly Reports through December 31, 2024
- Dues Report
- Donation Report
- Youth Scholarship Fund in the Self Help Credit Union
- Reserve Account First Horizon

Special Report: (10 minutes)

This report was postponed.

- Ronda Pierce will provide tips on building and maintaining relationships with your Sister City government officials and local groups supporting the Sister City Program

City Committee Reports:

President Cox requested that City Committees : Use this document as a guide on what is helpful to report at our Board meetings.

Kavala:

In the absence of Kavala City Committee Chair, Randy Griffin, President Cox shared a report for the program conducted in January whereby Board members and their guests were invited to Saint Barbara's Greek Orthodox Church to learn about the recently installed iconography in the Chapel.

Durham, England:

Eve Marion, Co-Chair announced their upcoming Pub Night to be held at the Lakewood Social. The goal is to meet and mingle, chat, share information about Durham, UK in an informal setting. She shared that she will be pursuing a request to be selected by Lakewood Social for a fundraising night.

Toyama:

Chris Boyer, Chair of the Toyama Committee shared that 16 students from Toyama School of Foreign Languages participated this year. Durham Tech and host families are crucial to the success of the event. Students participated in a tour of DBAP, 21C and the Durham Main Branch Library. Funds are raised through a fee the students pay; from these funds, costs for the program are covered. The Meet and Greet event at the Glass Jug and Farewell event are opportunities to welcome new members to the Toyama committee. A host family survey is planned and has, in the past, improved this aspect of the program.

Celaya:

Carolina Vera, co Chair, shared that they are planning an event for Cinco De Mayo. More information is forthcoming for a restaurant to host the committee. The event will most likely be in Chapel Hill to accommodate the UNC Dental Students who will want to support the event. The event is a fundraiser to bring the graduate-level, dental students from Celaya to Durham in the Fall. The event may include a silent auction.

Sibiu:

Chair Scurtu shared ambitious plans to alternate sharing a world music competition between Sibiu and Durham. Sibiu is waiting to hear about a funding request to host the competition in Fall of 2025. He also shared that the Mayor of Sibiu would like to hold an exchange of school age children; Chair Scurtu is gleaning interest from his local network to identify support for the exchange.

Goals Committees Reports:

Fundraising, Marketing and Membership Committee (Outreach and Engagement

President Cox asked City committees to please share information to post on social media, and the website.

[SCD Handbook](#)

Dues

Youth committee reports:

Patricia Sheppard, Chair of the Youth Advisory committee provided an update. She shared that the committee is made up of 3 youth from the City of Durham's Office on Youth program, Changed by Youth and 3 students currently engaged with Sister Cities. Three meetings have been held. The youth decided that the best way to move forward with the establishment of a new SCD Youth Committee would be to solicit input from youth via a questionnaire. This action is inline with our commitment to ensuring the future youth programming is directed by youth and for youth. The goal is to release the questionnaire by April and have feedback to process by the middle of May. Member Chris Boyer asked how the questionnaire will be distributed and Chair Sheppard shared that the students have discussed this and will confirm groups to send it to at their next meeting. Chair Sheppard shared that a challenge is getting consistent participation by the youth.

Chair Sheppard reminded the Board of these upcoming opportunities for youth.

- SCI programs updates
 - Leadership Summit deadline extended to March 15th
 - YAAS deadline to SCD is March 19th moved to 4/1
- SCD program updates
 - DRONE Academy -a collaboration with NCCU to learn about the DRONE industry conducted over 6 Saturdays April through May.

President Cox shared that she attended the information session given by our partner, Thousand Mile, held in Cary for youth interested in going to ZhuZhou for 3 weeks in June. She shared that unfortunately, no Durham student attended but that currently 8 students from Cary and Chapel Hill will be representing Sister Cities of Durham alongside their Chaperone.

President Cox shared that member, Yuki Temma, is planning a trip to Japan, including a visit to Toyama, through her volunteer work with the nonprofit, POOF, an youth economic development focused organization. She shared that POOF promotes international travel as a key step in youth development. She emphasized that POOF is a good connection for Sister Cities.

Governance

No presentation at this time.

New City Committee

President Cox shared that Pearl Forbes was recently in Monrovia, Liberia and distributed the menstrual kits. She shared that Liberia has been impacted by the funding cuts made by the US Government; they are currently working through how these funding cuts may impact their pursuit of Sister City status with Durham, NC.

Technology

President Cox thanked Leslie Fischer and Ronda Pierce (Technology Chair) for backing up the Durham City Office Computer Hard Drive.

- This item was postponed. Contracting with Give Butter, a Client Resource Management Tool to replace IContact and to provide us with the ability to better track fundraising efforts

SCD Peace Grove in Durham Central park

President Cox shared that Chair of the Peace Grove, Mike Shifflett is working with Durham Cental Park and Parks and Recreation on signage for the Peace Grove as well as improvements to our current directional sign. He also will be coordinating watering teams to be active by May through mid September.

Unfinished Business:

This item was postponed.

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

New Business:

President Cox moved that the Board create an ad hoc to create draft parameters for use of the current Youth Scholarship Fund.

Chris Boyer moved

Alma Reynaga seconded

Susannah asked if this work could be done by the Governance committee or the Youth Committee.

President Cox explained that the Governance committee declines this task in favor of an ad hoc committee. She also explained that this task would not be in line with the current work of the Youth Advisory Committee but that the ad hoc committee could choose to hear from the Youth Advisory committee and invite their participation.

The motion passed.

Opposed: Susannah Ochala

Action Items:

- Review the DRAFT [SCD Handbook](#) per the Membership Committee's request
- 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
- Finalize plans for your program and exchange (virtual or in person) in program year July 2024 through June 2025
- Encourage your committee members to pay dues.
- Peruse the Sister Cities International Website in preparation for a presentation on SCI and SCD at our next meeting.

Announcements:

- Yuki Temma is promoting a trip to Japan during the World Expo
- Melissa Perez a person of influence [Durham Magazine page 44-45](#)
- Gwenn Bookman was featured sharing history of Bennett College [Watch video](#). Video repeats a little bit but it is worth it to watch the whole 6 minutes.
- Mitch Scurtu- name to Who's who in America!
- Ronda Pierce is in Tanzania at the first ever [Tanzanian Economic Development Summit](#) - she has been working on creating this event since 2023!

Adjournment: 1:38pm

2025 Retreat and Meeting dates:

Saturday, January 25th (Planning Retreat)

March 13 changed to March 6

May 8

June 12

September 11

October TBD (Annual Meeting)

November 13 (first meeting of 25/26 Board)

Structure of a typical board meeting agenda

What should be included in a board meeting agenda? The structure of a typical board meeting agenda includes the following elements:

- **Call to order** – The board chair announces, “The meeting is now called to order” and states the time.
- **Welcoming remarks** – The board chair welcomes everyone and makes introductions if necessary.
- **Reading of the mission and vision statements** – This is an optional step.
- **Roll call** – The board secretary takes a roll, which can be oral and should also be written.
- **Changes to the agenda** – The board chair asks if any of the members wish to make any changes to the agenda. If so, the board votes on additions, changes, or deletions.
- **Quorum** – The board chair states whether a [quorum](#) is present.
- **Approval of minutes** – The board chair calls for a vote to approve the prior meetings’ minutes.
- **Officer reports** – The Board Chair gives a report followed by reports by the officers if applicable.
- **Financial reports** – The treasurer gives a report of donations, the budget, and any potential expenditures. [\(see note below\)](#)
- **Committee reports** – Committee chairs may give a brief oral report of their committee’s work.
- **Old business** – Discussion of items that were not resolved at the last meeting, those that need further discussion, and those that require a vote.
- **New business** – Discussion of new items along with the action needed to table them, delay action on them, or refer them to a committee.
- **Action items** – A review of tasks board members need to do before the next meeting.
- **Comments, announcements, and other business** – The board chair offers congratulations, condolences, and makes other special announcements.
- **Adjournment** – The board chair announces the formal closing of the meeting and states the time the meeting ended.

Financial Reports:

The Board should not vote to accept or approve financial reports, except for annual audited reports. Instead, you should note that the report was received for filing.

Explanation

Accuracy

You can't verify the accuracy of monthly financial reports, so you shouldn't vote to approve them.

Endorsement

Voting to approve a report endorses its contents, which you might not be able to do.

Robert's Rules of Order

According to Robert's Rules of Order, you should not vote to accept, adopt, approve, or receive written reports.

Annual audited reports:

However, you should vote on annual audited reports because they are different and require verification. You should make sure that the auditors' report accurately reflects the organization's finances.

Other financial report responsibilities:

Finance committees can use financial reports to understand the organization's financial status and performance. However, they are not responsible for the accuracy of the reports.

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New Business Template

Key points to include for each "New Business" item on your agenda:

- Clear description: Briefly summarize the new topic or proposal, highlighting its key aspects.
- Presenter: Specify who will be presenting the new business idea.
- Expected discussion points: Outline key questions or areas to focus on during the discussion.
- Action needed: Clearly state what decision or action is required from the group (e.g., "discuss and provide feedback", "assign further research", "vote on approval").
- Responsible person: Designate who will be responsible for following up on the action needed.

Example

"Potential partnership with [Company X]"

- Action: Review partnership proposal, discuss key terms, and decide whether to pursue further negotiations.