

Sister Cities of Durham Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 13, 2025

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Location: Zoom (venue changed last-minute due to parking constraints)

Presiding President: Nancy Cox

Recording Secretary: John Felheim

Call to Order: 7:05 PM

Attendance

Quorum confirmed. Nancy Cox, John Felheim, Chris Boyer, Mark Goodwillie, Patricia Sheppard, Susanna Ochola, Lusia Li, Carolina Vera, Gwendolyn Bookman, Di Qin (Dee), Violet Evans, Leslie Fischer, Celeste Holtzmann, James Long (non voting co-chair) Zenani Fogg (online).

Agenda Review and Changes

The President proposed moving **Old Business** to occur **before the Treasurer's Report**.

Motion: Move Old Business ahead of Treasurer Report.

Second: Chris Boyer.

Vote: Passed (majority raised hands; no objections).

No additional changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

1. September 11, 2025 Minutes

- Minor corrections noted: misspellings (e.g., correction to "Susanna Ochola").

Motion: Approve September 11 minutes as corrected.

Moved: Susanna. **Second:** Patricia.

Vote: Passed unanimously.

2. September 18, 2025 Minutes

- Not approved; minutes remain in unedited draft form.
Will be brought back for approval at a future meeting.

Presentation

Logan Harris delivered her scheduled presentation. (PowerPoint shared during meeting.)

President's Report

(Delivered verbally; extended discussion on organizational workflows.)

Key highlights:

- **Venue Change for This Meeting:**
Emergency relocation to Zoom due to overflow parking concerns at planned venue.
- **Executive Committee Expansion:**
Additional members may be invited to support agenda planning and organizational oversight.
- **Directors & Officers Insurance:**
Newly secured; ensures board members cannot be held individually liable.
- **Reimbursements & Finance Workflow:**
Detailed instructions for city committees regarding receipts for annual meeting–related expenses.
The City of Durham will reimburse costs submitted by early December.
- **Upcoming Events:**
Durham–UK Committee event at High Wire Brewing (5–7 PM).
- Focus for the year:
 - Assess board bandwidth (commitment forms due in December).
 - Align fiscal year, program year, and elections.

- Strengthen financial procedures and governance.
 - Improve communication with sister cities (cards, newsletters, Zoom calls).
 - Membership dues reminder: \$20 individual / \$35 family.
 - Annual Meeting recap: ~100 attendees, positive feedback.
 - Fundraising plans: Giving Tuesday for youth programs and end-of-year campaign.
 - Invitation: Informal board social at Nancy's home (Sunday, November 16, 3 PM).
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Financial Reports

Treasurer's report postponed to next meeting.

Note: Report received for filing; no vote taken per Robert's Rules.

City Committee Reports

Nominations Committee Report

Presenter: Gwenn Bookman, Chair (Committee: Gwenn, Mark, Eve)

Board Member Nominations

1. **Patricia Sheppard** – Second 3-year term
 - Introduction provided highlighting her leadership and prior service (Membership Committee Chair).
 - **Motion:** Approve Patricia for a second term.
Second: Mark.
Vote: Passed unanimously.

2. **Di ("Derek") Chen** – First 3-year term
 - Preferred name confirmed as "Derek."
 - **Motion:** Approve Di/Derek for first term.
Second: Mark.

Vote: Passed unanimously.

Officer Elections (all conducted individually)

1. **President – Nancy Cox**

Motion: Elect Nancy to a second 1-year term.

Second: Chris & Patricia.

Vote: No objections; approved unanimously.

2. **Vice President – Di (“Derek”) Chen**

Motion: Elect Di to his first Vice President term.

Second: Mark.

Vote: No objections; approved unanimously.

3. **Secretary – John Felheim**

- Standing for first full elected term; previously filled a partial term.

Motion: Elect John as Secretary.

Second: Susanna.

Vote: No objections; approved unanimously.

Treasurer Appointment: Min Shu agreed to continue as appointed Treasurer.

The President acknowledged and thanked outgoing Executive Committee member **Chris Boyer** for several years of service.

Goals Committee Reports

Not covered due to time constraints. Items to return to next meeting.

Old Business

Bylaw Changes:

1. **Annual Meeting Date:**

- Motion to remove “October” from bylaws and allow flexibility.

- Approved unanimously.
 - New language: “The annual meeting shall take place at a time and place designated by the Board of Directors.”
2. **Membership Voting on Board Members:**
- Motion to remove membership voting privilege for at-large board members.
 - Motion failed
3. **Board Size:**
- Discussion on number of at-large members (currently 13 plus 9 city chairs).
 - No decision; tabled for January meeting.
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New Business

- Volunteer Handbook review postponed.
 - Holiday Parade: Sign-up link shared; Dragon Fest group confirmed participation.
 - Youth Scholarship Fund: Committee to draft guidelines for fund disbursement.
 - SCI Updates: New website, upcoming leadership meetings, youth programs (Young Artists & Authors Showcase).
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Action Items

For All City Committees

1. **Submit receipts** for annual meeting expenses and any 2025 program expenses
Deadline: Sunday November 16
Recipients: Min Shu, David, and Nancy
(Needed for December submission to the City of Durham.)
2. **Provide complete written City Committee reports** for inclusion in minutes (emphasize goals, outcomes, what worked, improvements).
Deadline: Before the next meeting.

Executive Committee

3. **Prepare streamlined agenda** for January meeting; avoid overload.
4. **Consider inviting additional advisors** to Executive Committee meetings.

President (Nancy)

5. **Explore alternative formats** for President's Reports (e.g., recorded updates).
6. **Continue oversight of reimbursement report** preparation for City of Durham.

Finance Committee

7. **Review City Committee reimbursement policies** and draft updated guidance for the next meeting.

Announcements

- Recognition of Chris Boyer for years of service on Executive Committee.
- Welcome to new board members: Patricia Sheppard and Di Qin.
- Informal social gathering at Nancy's home on Sunday.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at approximately **8:41 PM**

Meeting Cheat Sheet:

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.