

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NH  
BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON SISTER CITIES  
AND CITIZEN DIPLOMACY  
September 27, 2017 MEETING MINUTES**

Attendees:

- Mike Nelson
- Valerie Rochon
- Steve Zadravec
- Stephanie Seacord, Acting Meeting Secretary
- Nancy Carmer, Economic Development Program Manager (ex-officio)/Acting Meeting Chair

The meeting began at 4:05 pm. Nancy noted the Committee Chair's inability to attend.

The Committee voted to accept the 8/30/2017 meeting minutes as presented.

In continued review and discussion of US city Sister City research the committee began identifying commonalities and best practices:

1. Most of the Sister City alliances operate as NGO non-profits, relying on volunteers and individual fund-raising for their programs and activities.
2. Typically one or two people, and school connections, keep the relationships going.

The Committee also suggested some additional lines of inquiry:

1. What is the Portsmouth School Board policy on engaging teachers in more Sister City or Sister School relationships.
2. Should we conduct an 'audit' of the existing Sister City relationships – what/where/purpose? Should we encourage more cultural exchange from the high school spring vacation trips? A scholarship?
3. Do we want to keep all the Sister City relationships going?
4. What's the best next step to engage the community in this conversation – Facebook page or Facebook group (by invitation) to gather awareness and interest for a live discussion/forum. Link with School Department Facebook page? Committee asked for guidance from the City Public Affairs Director regarding the protocol for this and how to leverage the new City website for the Sister City Committee engagement with the community.
5. What can Sister Cities International do for us?

Updates from Committee

- a. Upcoming relevant events: Nichinan visit Oct 4-9. Stephanie will report on the visit for the Portsmouth Herald.
- b. Nichinan Pen Pal Program will also exchange the first batch of letters with Nichinan Gakuen Jr-Sr High School during that visit. Portsmouth High School teacher Laura LaVallee has arranged 6 high school correspondents; Portsmouth Public Library has coordinated 12 middle school participants.

- c. Other – Nancy highlighted news and upcoming SCI conferences and events which she planned to share electronically with the Committee.

**Next Steps:**

- a) Summarize the best practices from Committee members inquiries/responses
- b) Get answers to questions on Facebook page/group and draft concept for Committee to review.

**Next meeting:**

**Wednesday, October 25, 2017 at 4 pm**

**City Manager's Conference Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall, 1 Junkins Ave.**