



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH

Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Sister Cities

Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 4 pm

CANCELLED

Thursday, April 17, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

Attending: Councilor Rich Blalock, chair; Christine Friese, Atty. Bob Sullivan, Ben Van Camp, Steve Chinosi, Mary Carey Foley, Stephanie Seacord. Absent: Robert Conard.

1. Old Business:

1. Update on Sister City Trust/ Next Steps – Committee voted unanimously to have Bob Sullivan and Christine Freise work on the language of the Trust, with authority to discuss and fine-tune with the Trustees of the Trust Fund.
2. Update on follow-up with Szolnok, Hungary – Authorized Christine to send the amended letter to Adrienn Adam in the Mayor's office.
3. Update on Santarcangelo Mayor-to-Mayor meeting – Portsmouth High School and Ben VanCamp to coordinate with the UNH Italian team on the Retrovato Film Festival (March 31 – April 6, 2025) next year. Reviewing the information about the art light installation and poetry options. Santarcangelo poet in English and Italian in theirs. Should be part of a bigger celebration – maybe unveiled for the film festival? Need to sort out the technical details, location, etc. with DPW and Fire Department. Steve Chinosi reported that the February visit was very engaging with progressive, energized students tagging with counterparts. The PHS Italian team will be in Santarcangelo this summer. Locations might consider Bohenko Park or adjacent Little Italy area (Sheraton corner of Deer and Market Streets) where commemorative bench and pocket garden are located.
4. Update on PHS student exchanges – Steve also reported that Laura LaVallee (Nichinan) and Joe Marquette (Santarcangelo) are developing teams of PHS faculty to embed the Sister City connections in the faculty culture and ensure a robust relationship is sustainable. The Nichinan Gakuen and Santarcangelo students will visit Portsmouth Sep 29-October 14. Possible story idea for NH Chronicle. Stephanie provided a "thank you card" for Committee signatures for Steve to take to Nichinan.

2. New Business:

1. Ideas to reach out & strengthen ties to Sister Cities/ Friendship Cities -given current foreign affairs – Christine and Councilor Blalock met with a regional State Department representative to explore opportunities.
2. Nichinan – Portsmouth Peace Treaty 120th anniversary – Stephanie suggested the idea of a Nichinan-PHS exchange alumni reunion during the October visit. Will provide a list of names to Steve to explore contacting them through the PHS Alumni Association.

3. Public Comment – none

Adjourned.

Next meeting: Thursday, May 15 at 4 pm.