

City of Portsmouth
Sister Cities Blue Ribbon Committee
Conference Room A at City Hall*
MEETING MINUTES

January 15, 2025 at 4pm

Councilor Rich Blalock, chair; Christine Frieze, Ben Van Camp, Mary Carey Foley, Robert Conard, Bob Sullivan, Stephanie Seacord. Excused: Steve Chinosi.

1. Recap of Lord Mayor Portsmouth, England Holiday Toast – Invited Portsmouth to send video for large screen display outside Town Hall. Interesting to learn about parallels for Portsmouth with UK Sister Cities: Halifax NS (Navy base and 2025 yacht race), Portsmouth RI and Portsmouth VA.
2. Sister City Trust Fund – Trust draft will be reviewed at Feb 19 Trustees of the Trust Fund meeting. If they approve it, it will go to the City Council. If not, it will come back to the Sister Cities Committee.
3. Relationship with Hungary – Invite Peter Somssich to next Committee meeting and plan a zoom with the Szolnok contact, Adrienn Adam

**Hungarian Consul and Exhibit to Highlight
60th Anniversary of 1956 Hungarian Revolution,
November 15, 2016 at State House**

Portsmouth – The New Hampshire Friends of Hungary will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution on Tuesday, Nov.15 at 2PM at the New Hampshire State House. The event is also co-sponsored by State Representatives Laura Pantelakos (Portsmouth) and Arthur Barnes (Salem).

“As Hungarian Americans who still have strong connections to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, we are grateful for the bipartisan support of this event by Representatives Pantelakos and Barnes that allows us to hold this event at the Hall of Flags in the State House where a commemorative plaque has hung for many years “, said Peter Somssich, a spokesperson for the NH Friends of Hungary. “We are also honored to have Consul Gabor Garai, the Honorary Hungarian Consul from Boston agree to help us commemorate this anniversary and to help facilitate the opportunity to display part of an exhibit that he was instrumental in assembling”, Somssich added.

In addition to comments by the Hungarian Consul, both Mr. Somssich and Nick Czifrik, who both left Hungary as refugee children, will relate their personal stories associated with their escape from Hungary and subsequent immigration to the United States.

Some Americans may still remember the Oct.23,1956 uprising against an oppressive government supported by the Soviet Union which resulted in more than 200,000 Hungarians fleeing their homeland when it failed. Some 47,000 of these refugees made new homes in the United States.

“We are also grateful for the proclamations issued on Oct. 23 by Governor Maggie Hassan and Speaker Shawn Jasper on behalf of the legislature”, said Somssich.

Additional note:

Hungarian Revolution Plaque

In an opposite corner of the first floor of the Statehouse is a small plaque commemorating the revolution of October 1956, when Hungarians protested Soviet oppression and demanded a more democratic government. The Soviet Union quashed the uprising in a matter of days, and 200,000 Hungarians fled the country. More than 40,000 Hungarian refugees arrived in New Hampshire, and a group of Hungarian-Americans still visits the Statehouse each October.

4. New Business

- Chamber of Commerce received inquiry about organizing international trips from a travel agency interested in arranging a London trip with a side day-trip to Portsmouth UK. Open to community members with a rebate per ticket that Chamber offered to split with the Sister Cities Trust.
- Santarcangelo follow-up: Mayors discussed our mutual interest in ‘slow food’ and walking tours and a light installation that would be funded by Santarcangelo. Councilor Blalock to inquire with Mayor.

5. Public comment – None.