



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH

Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Sister Cities

Thursday, July 17, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

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

1. Old Business:

- Update on Sister City Trust/ Next Steps – Bob Sullivan and Christine met again with Trustees. Christine reported on Bob's behalf that a simpler approach to address the issue of having modest funds available for expenses to entertain visiting Sister City delegations is to create a Sister City account within the City of Portsmouth accounts. Donations to this account would be tax deductible and the allocation of funds would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Committee. Bob will provide details at the next Committee meeting. On a motion by Ben, seconded by Mary Carey the Committee voted to authorize Bob to proceed with setting up an account.
- Nichinan
 - Visit by Mayor Takashima and 6 other adults, September 3-6, 2025. The Mayor's office confirmed they plan to visit "As it marks the 40th anniversary of the sister city agreement with the City of Portsmouth, we aim to participate in commemorative events so as to promote further exchange between our cities."
 - Sep 4: Mayor's Reception. Committee voted on a motion by Stephanie seconded by Ben that Councilor Blalock would make a request to Mayor McEachern to host a small reception for the visitors, City Council and appropriate counterparts (e.g. Chamber) in the Portsmouth Room. Mary Carey Foley offered to coordinate and fund the refreshments. Ben suggested as a gift ArtfulCarver wood clocks with a chart of the Portsmouth area including stars marking the site of the Shipyard Treaty Rooms and Wentworth By the Sea. Inscription: Portsmouth Peace Treaty 120th Anniversary 2025. 8" clock is \$30; 14" clock is \$90. The committee voted to place the order for the clocks to provide sufficient lead time before September 4. The Committee also discussed creating a digital record of past gifts and list of options for future gifts for posting to the Committee page of the website.

- Sep 5: Bellringing in Market Square, Friday, starting at 3:15 pm with bellringing at 3:47 pm. Inviting Mayor and Council. Ben suggested the group might like to attend the Veterans Count preview of the Blue Angels airshow. He will followup with Renee Plummer, organizer.
- Nichinan visit in October – dates TBD.
- Santarcangelo
 - Art light installation. Having reviewed the details on the proposed gift from the Mayor of Santarcangelo the Committee agreed that many details are outside of its purview and expertise. Having also reviewed the Public Art Review Committee (PARC) guidelines for public art, the Committee voted on a motion by Stephanie, seconded by Christine to refer the project to PARC for their review and recommendation. Hopefully before the Santarcangelo delegation arrives in October (date TBD)
- Update on follow-up with Szolnok, Hungary – Christine received a formatted letter from the Mayor's office, signed by Christine to Adrienn in the Mayor's office. On a motion by Stephanie seconded by Ben the Committee voted to authorize Christine to send the letter.
- Update on tour to Portsmouth UK. Ben reported that the UK trip is being planned for April 19-28, 2026. There will be a public information meeting (location TBD – Library?) on September 10. If 20 people register, the trip itinerary will add a one-day/overnight visit to Portsmouth UK at the end. Committee agreed the Lord Mayor's Holiday Toast zoom might be a good time to announce the visit.
- Update on prospective Friendship City agreement with Nelson NZ. Councilor Blalock has drafted the details for the agreement application as a courtesy to both Mayors. He will provide that draft and a transmittal letter to Mayor McEachern.

2. Public Comment – none.

3. Next meeting August 21.

Adjourned 4:54 pm.