



Morgantown Sister Cities Commission

MINUTES - Regular Meeting via Zoom

Thursday, July 27, 2023 (5:00 to 6:00 p.m.)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85172214897?pwd=M01XampkZFdPNThmb2JwWUUnUS9qdz09>

Meeting ID: 851 7221 4897 and Passcode: 618511

CALL TO ORDER AT 5:09 PM EDT

Commissioners: George Lies, Liz Finklea, Lola Contreras, Sarah Barnes, and City Rep. Joe Abu-Ghannam.

Excused absences: Helene Friedberg, Lyndie Jones.

Approved Meeting Minutes June 29, 2023. No announcements.

NEW BUSINESS

1. New Commissioner Sarah Barnes, approved by City Council July 5, welcomed, and Sarah briefed commission on her professional technology background.
2. We welcomed City Rep. Joe Abu-Ghannam to MSCC commission, and he will be the City Council representative.
3. We agreed to hold our August 24 meeting at Morgantown High School, South Park, a Thursday, 5-6 PM. Rep. Abu-Ghannam is a MHS teacher. See below.
4. George registered for online seat at Sister Cities International Annual Business Meeting: Durham, North Carolina July 26, 2023. <https://sistercities.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1c837221eacb97a08e1abd683&id=6414a03b8c&e=8d302ce647>
5. In Planning: MSCC discussed hosting Han Dynasty sculpture reliefs and mask art exhibit in October-November. *Refer to addendum.*
 - a. We explored exhibit space in the community such as Eureka, community center, Wiles Hill, Art Bar, Walnut St. business which hosts Wednesday night art programs, and Monongalia Art Center, downtown, as well as in the library of Morgantown High (next meeting there Aug. 24).
 - b. George informed Mayor, and requested help and mayor wrote to Eureka and to BOPARC.

- c. Joe suggested we promote the event by hosting a table thru Main Street Art Walk, with tentative date of October 14 Saturday. This can be a promo for commission, too.
 - d. Lola reported requests must be in a letter and send via email to BOPARC.
6. Discussed 2023-2024 Budget and Activity Plan Commissioners discussed and did some brainstorming.
 - a. George will send previous MSCC FY budget to commissioners for input on estimates expenses through June 30, 2024. He estimated a remaining budget of about \$700 from FY 2022-23.
 - b. Rep. Abu-Ghannam reviewed **previous year's FY budget** which contains a budget of \$3,440 for the commission.
 - c. Based on that info, we discussed preparing a preliminary budget of about \$3,440.
 - d. We all agreed that first we need to identify all MSCC activities in the next FY, and estimate anticipated expenses—and then put together a complete budget. Typically, the city requests budgets prior to February.
7. Operations Items:
 - a. We discussed meeting dates adjustments for 2023-24, and options for In-Person Meetings, proposed every 3 months, and adjusting for holidays (e.g., Thanksgiving) that fell on meeting dates.
 - b. Liz suggested that we meet November 30 as a date, between Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.
 - c. Liz wrote thank you letters to be sent to businesses, Cinco de Mayo May 6 event, based on Lola's list.
 - d. Deputy City Clerk Heather Carl sent email that she would send the letters, **if we used the city's template, although she** was going on vacation time.
 - e. As reported, we had no MSCC activities in June-July.
8. Newsletter discussion: Sarah added insights into using digital info that could change we write the Sister Cities Commission newsletters in future.
 - a. We reviewed ideas and possible articles for a Fall Newsletter, e.g., items on Xuzhou proposed art exhibit; and Hispanic month, International Festival, planned for Spring 2024. We talked of ideas about the next year including recruitment for vacancies.
 - b. City Councilor Abu-Ghannam emphasized that we need to work with the new City Communications Director. Also, he noted that the city does its own community Enews that could be useful in promoting events.
 - c. We put a Brochure on hold, pending other business. It needs an update.
9. We reported no new updates or news about two items:
 - a. WV Coal Assn. Business Meeting with Jiangsu State, Xuzhou Foreign Affairs, China Embassy. George attended the zoom meeting but has not received further details. According to contact (Ellen, Xuzhou Foreign Affairs Office), she is waiting on info from Jiangsu state government.
 - b. Guanajuato U. Request: ESL Certification Faculty to go to Mexico, late

August or September. Tracy Dingess of WVU foreign languages was working on this separately.

Adjournment at 6:11 PM EDT.

NEXT MEETING – Thursday 5-6 PM, August 24. Morgantown High School, in-person; we meet City Council Rep. Abu-Ghannam, a MHS teacher, in the school lobby. Parking in school lot.

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