



SISTER CITIES PROGRAM

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

12:00pm – Trinity UMC

- I. Welcome
 - a. Roll Call:
 - i. Present: Victoria White, Lindsey Ferguson, Austin Fesmire, Ersu Henry, Larry Eaton, Randy Dowling and Betty Ruleman
 - 1. Visitors: Sandra Kinney (Main Street)
 - ii. Absent: Becky Simpson
- II. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Motion was made by a non-voting member, therefore, approval is not valid.
- III. New Business
 - a. Request to Sponsor JapanFest at Athens City Primary School – Board agreed to sponsor program again once invoice was received, last year's donation was \$500.
Motion was made by Betty Ruleman, seconded by Ersu Henry, to approve the funds be sent once invoice was received.
Motion carried
 - b. Potential scholarship to attend TWU trip to Japan for SCRA Jorja – Jorja has been an asset with the TWU Chinzei Gakuin program for the last two years and would like to receive the scholarship to attend the trip to Japan, even though she resides in Polk County. Only one scholarship has been awarded of the three the Board approved, for the program.
Motion was made by Lindsey Ferguson, seconded by a non-voting member, for a one-time exception, since there were no other McMinn/Athens/TWU student applications, to award Jorja Lewis the \$1,000 SCRA scholarship.
Approval not valid
 - c. Prep for Chinzei Gakuin visit 2025 – Betty Ruleman explained the program has received five (5) applications from MCHS students for SCRA's this year and is wanting to build the relationship with the school and not reject any applicants. She is requesting additional funds for two additional SCRA's and the program will fund the fifth student as he is only able to attend the second week.
Motion was made by Ersu Henry, seconded by a non-voting member, to fund two (2) additional SCRA's for a total of \$2,140.
Approval not valid

- d. Discuss how to handle Chinzei Gakuin Welcome dinner – Board agreed the Sister Cities will host the Welcome dinner.
- e. Community outreach – Ersa Henry has volunteered to speak at Kiwanis and the Optimist Club and will submit an outline for approval. Austin Fesmire also suggested a program at Keith Church. The presentation should be about the history of Isahaya and the Sister Cities Program, not just the Japan trip.
- f. Athens Isahaya lecture series – Last year the Board donated \$2500 for the series. Mana and Kumi did an incredible job with the series this year and the Board would be able to take advantage of additional opportunities in the next year with another donation. All of the classes were offered free to the public but found that some were signing up but not showing up. Should there be a fee involved for some of the classes to cover the cost of the supplies? Motion was made by Ersa Henry, seconded by Lindsey Ferguson, to approve a donation of \$2500 to continue the program as soon as the invoice is received.

Motion Carried

Motion was made by Lindsey Ferguson, seconded by a non-voting member, to charge \$10 to register for the Bento Box class.

Approval not valid

- g. Set next meeting date – March 12, 2025 12:00pm

IV. The meeting adjourned

Approved:

Betty Ruleman, Secretary

Date