

Kitakata Sister City Advisory Board Meeting Action Minutes
12.21.2022

Advisory Board Members Present:

Adrienne Scritsmier
Ashleigh Sumerlin
Tracy Sailors
Aaron Reyna
Seiji Shiratori

Erica Behler – Recreation Coordinator

Members of the Public Present:

Shinobu Chrisman
Lois Reimer

Staff Present:

AGENDA ITEM	ACTIONS
CALLED TO ORDER	6:02 pm
Minutes	Aaron Reyna made the motion to approve the 11.9.22 minutes, Seiji Seconded, all were in favor, none opposed
Public Comment	N/A
Budget Update	<p>Seiji shared a brief status report on the budget. \$2,900 dollars will be reimbursed by Kitakata for hotel expenses. (This amount is actually \$3,121.23 as of 1/30/23) Remaining budget ~\$8,000 to last until the end of June. *Please note that Erica has requested a full transaction report from finance to share at upcoming 2/8 meeting).</p> <p>Aaron made a motion to approve the expenses associated with the Sounds of Japan event which will feature Oregon Koto-kai and Portland Taiko- Seiji seconded, all were in favor and none were opposed. Currently 83 people are registered for the event.</p>
Debrief of Delegation	<p>Debrief of December 2022 Delegation- 10 students, 2 teachers, 1 travel agent</p> <p>What went well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -15 passenger van -Text communication -Community Center Lunch -Early advertising for host families -High School day -Elementary/Middle School/Bullwinkle's day went very smooth -Hands on/artistic activities <p>Needs Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Abella Italian Kitchen set up was awkward -More involvement of teachers in pre-meetings -home stay pairings (less last minute adjustments) -More City staff involvement -Clarity on interpreter involvement -Having a reserve of host families for last minute changes/requests -Cost/Aquarium Day- the aquarium is quite small, maybe we should add the Tillamook cheese factory to this <p>What should we do differently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have welcome meal at Community Center

- Encourage Kitakata to have planning meetings with all board members instead of just Erica
- Get student profiles earlier and be made aware of students who wouldn't fit well together
- Promote host family opportunities in Spokesman article
- Leverage previous host family list to recruit in the future
- Leverage school teachers/district to be hosts
- “Save the dates” for schools/partners/etc...
- T-shirt/tumbler thank you
- organize a board hosted dinner/activity schedule
- push more for teachers to stay in home stays
- Organize a trip to the Japanese consulate

The conversation took a brief turn into potentially ordering some promotional items for partners involved in the delegation (teachers, businesses, past board members, etc...) such as t-shirts with both city logos that say “Ask me about my sister city” or nice travel coffee mugs or tumblers. Another idea would be to ask the schools for any school specific swag to send to Kitakata.

Adrienne commented that she liked the idea of host families or school teachers signing up to host teachers for dinner in the future. She added that this may solve our dilemma with entertaining chaperones who stay in a hotel, and give the host families additional time to get to know the teachers of the group.

Sammy commented that we should urge the chaperones to stay with host families a bit more. He had the feeling that they were being polite by saying they wanted to stay in a hotel. Sammy also commented that the chaperones LOVED having dinner at Lois's house and seeing an American home.

Shinobu commented that when she takes students to Kitakata that she stays in a local home. She said that this gives you more background and sense of community. Shinobu said that she is not given the option when she visits Kitakata.

Lois commented that she also always stayed with a host family when she took students to Japan. She said it's not always comfortable at first, but it deepens the experience. She really enjoyed hosting the teachers at her house for dinner. Lois suggested asking past board members to host. Lois also told a quick story about how at dinner, she and Shuji San made the connection that more than 20 years ago, Shuji took English lessons in Shiokawa, Fukushima from Lois's niece. Without having that dinner together at Lois's house- this connection may not have been made.

Shinobu commented that she would be happy to help with communications in the future to help with clarity and avoid misunderstanding.

Adrienne said she was surprised to learn that 2 or 3 of the students had been to Wilsonville before.

The group should consider how transportation arrangements will be made in the future for a larger group. The cost for 2, fifteen passenger vans will be cheaper than a charter bus- something to consider.

Board
Comments

Erica mentioned that the group will be getting 2 new board members in January, and there will be 1 empty position on the board.

Ashleigh had the question of board members are allowed to serve on two consecutive boards at once. Erica said she wasn't sure but would check on this.

Erica asked for potential questions to add to the host family survey:

-What additional information about your host students would have been helpful to know before hand?

-Would you host again?

-Do you know anyone else who may be interested in hosting?

-Is there anything the board could have done to prepare you any better?

-Option to be anonymous (name optional)

Ashleigh wanted clarification on whether or not board members need to register for the Sounds of Japan event.

Sammy mentioned JASO Shinnenkai and that it's coming up soon. The group did not have much availability to attend. Adrienne commented that she wasn't sure the value of the event was there if we'd be networking with people outside of our area for potential host families.

Erica said that she would be out of town for this but would be happy to supply anyone who wanted to table with our tabling set up and some fliers to hand out.

ADJOURN

7:09 pm