

SISTER CITIES MEETING
Hartford TOWN HALL
March 28, 2017
5:30pm

Present: Joan Ponzoni, Brenda Lamphere, Gayle Ottmann, Frederica Graham, Skye Murray, Jeff Arnold

Chair, Joan Ponzoni, brought meeting to order. Introductions were made: Jeff Arnold, Child care owner; Frederica Graham, retired teacher, now teaching French, privately; Sky Murray, DHMC Pediatric Chaplain. It was also announced that the Selectboard liaison to the Committee will be Sandra Mariotti.

Joan has also spoken with Thatcher Hinman, HHS teacher. He and his students have been interfacing with French classes in Cenon, France, Hartford's Sister City, through Facebook and Skype.

Frederica offered to speak with Don Watson who was instrumental in setting up Hanover's Sister City Program with the invitation to attend a Hartford Sister City meeting and offer any assistance. The Burlington Sister City program was also mentioned as a resource.

Joan will be attending the Agricultural Festival in Morocco in April. Sue Buckholtz, one of Hartford's State Representatives, and member of the Agricultural Committee, has been invited to join her and is attempting to work around her schedule to be able to travel with Joan to this area wide event. Joan is collecting small Vermont items to present to the Cenon and Meknes officials.

There was discussion on student exchange programs. Skye participated in a month-long program and had the pleasure of having a host family student live with her for a month. It was a very rewarding experience. This discussion led to the funding of a Sister City program to provide travel scholarships for students and other groups.

Paperwork was passed out that explained the structure of a Sister City program and its four focus areas: Community Development, Art and Cultural, Business and Trade, Youth and Education. The group agreed to choose one focus area until the program was underway with increased interest.

As Joan has received several applications to sit on this committee, Jeff raised the question as why there has to be only five members as set forth by the Selectboard. Gayle agreed to speak to Chair Grassi as to the restriction of numbers. She also suggested that perhaps the Ex. Com. could consist of three officers and two ad hoc members with the remaining interested citizens considered as 'members.' Further discussion is necessary to set up structure so as not to be exclusionary.

Next meeting: **May 2, 2017 – 5:15pm – Place TBD**