

Manitowoc International Relations Association (MIRA)

Minutes of the Membership Meeting held on Monday, September 25, 2017 at 6:30 p.m., Planning/Engineering Conference Room, Manitowoc City Hall, 900 Quay Street, Manitowoc, Wisconsin. **In attendance:** MIRA President Cindy Kaesermann, MIRA Vice President Wanda LeClair, Debbie Gainey, Kelly Meyer, Perk Foster, Jim Larson, Kay Larson, District 2 City Alder Scott McMeans. At 7:04 p.m., Mayor Justin Nickels joined the meeting in progress.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by MIRA President Cindy Kaesermann.

Kamogawa Adult Delegation visit: A committee report by Debbie Gainey, Chairperson of the Adult Delegation visit, was given. The 8th Wings of Friendship Delegation from sister-city Kamogawa, Japan visited Manitowoc from July 1 - 5, 2017. Debbie Gainey reported that all went very smoothly during the Kamogawa delegation's visit. The month of July had been selected for the delegation's visit so the Kamogawa visitors could enjoy summertime in Manitowoc. The special activities planned were greatly enjoyed by all, including a golf outing, tour of the submarine S.S. Cobia, cooking experience and tour at Roncalli High School, Milwaukee Brewers baseball game, and a tour of the Parallel 44 Winery. Kamogawa visitors also enjoyed home-style evening suppers with Manitowoc families. The only challenge during the July visit was scheduling events around the Fourth of July holiday, and it was suggested that if the Kamogawa delegation were to visit in the summer again, a different weekend would be selected to avoid scheduling difficulties due to the holiday. Debbie thanked her committee members for their assistance.

SEP 2017 Exchange: A committee report by Kelly Meyer, Student Exchange Program Coordinator, was given. Six Manitowoc area high school students were selected to participate in the 2017 Student Exchange Program (SEP), and they traveled to sister-city Kamogawa, Japan from July 21 - July 31. When the Manitowoc students returned home on July 31, they were also accompanied by six Kamogawa high school students. The Kamogawa SEP students visited Manitowoc and engaged in cultural and educational activities from July 31 - August 9, 2017.

NEW BUSINESS:

SEP 2018 Program: Cindy Kaesermann stated that the time frame for the Manitowoc to Kamogawa and Kamogawa to Manitowoc SEP exchanges worked out very well for 2017, and she suggested that we will select dates for 2018 around that same time period in July/August. A discussion was held about possible future scholarships for SEP students, and potential sources of funding for those scholarships. Scott McMeans noted that if we do offer a partial or full scholarship for SEP students, MIRA should establish written guidelines for the application process and distribution of those scholarship funds.

2018 Manitowoc Delegation visit to Kamogawa: Manitowoc, Wisconsin, U.S.A. and Kamogawa, Chiba Prefecture, Japan will be celebrating their 25th anniversary as sister-cities in 2018, and a delegation visit of Manitowoc citizens is being planned to celebrate the 25th anniversary in Kamogawa. Cindy Kaesermann reported that a visit may occur in October 2018, which would coincide with the Oyama Senmaida Tanada Night Festival. The festival is usually

held the third weekend in October. The Oyama Senmaida rice fields are illuminated with several thousand twinkling LED lights and torches, creating a spectacle of lights and entertainment celebrated over three days. During the delegation trip, several days would be spent in Kamogawa, and after the visit to our sister-city, another city (to be determined) would be visited. A discussion was held about a possible city to visit. In the past, Tokyo and the Mount Fuji area have been visited. Suggested possibilities include Kyoto, Kamakura and Yokohama. Planning for this 2018 delegation visit will begin in October 2017.

Library Exchange: Cindy Kaesermann reported that in January 2017, MIRA President Cindy Kaesermann and MIRA Vice President Wanda LeClair met with the new Director of the Manitowoc Public Library, Kristen Stoeger, to introduce ourselves and explain about MIRA and our sister-city relationship with Kamogawa, Japan. The public libraries in Kamogawa and in Manitowoc have enjoyed a sister-library program for many years, with reciprocal exchanges of books and materials which benefit the patrons of both libraries. When the adult delegation from Kamogawa visited Manitowoc in July 2017, a book was brought along from the Kamogawa Public Library to be donated to the Manitowoc Public Library. And during the summer SEP program, the Kamogawa SEP students took part in a special program at the Manitowoc Public Library, enjoying an exploding craft stick activity and making pixie sticks. Cindy also reported that Kristen Stoeger will be writing a letter to be delivered to the Director of the Kamogawa Public Library.

Pen Pal Program: Wanda LeClair, Pen Pal Program Coordinator, reported that for the past two years, we have had a very successful Pen Pal Exchange Program. Sarah Arenz, a 6th grade teacher at Jackson Elementary School, and her class participated in the pen pal exchange with an 8th grade class at Kamogawa Middle School. For the 2017-2018 school year, however, Mrs. Arenz is teaching in the Kiel Public School District. We are in the process of recruiting a new teacher for the Pen Pal Program, and once the teacher and class have been selected, the program will continue.

MIRA Funding: District 2 City Alder Scott McMeans spoke on behalf of the City of Manitowoc, and addressed some questions about MIRA funding and budgeting, which will be explored in a future meeting.

The next MIRA meeting will be scheduled after discussing items with the Kamogawa International Relations Association (KIRA).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m. CDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Wanda LeClair, MIRA Vice President

October 2, 2017