On Tuesday, October 8, 2019, Chairperson Mr. Nowadzky called the meeting of the Greater Des Moines Sister Cities Commission to order at 4:45 PM in the MacRae Conference Room, Richard A. Clark Municipal Services Center, 1551 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER
Mr. Becker, who had been serving as Cumming’s acting representative to the Commission, introduced Ms. Angie Ritchie, who was appointed to the Commission by the City of Cumming to replace Ms. Hendrickson as their primary representative. Mr. Becker remains their alternate representative.

MINUTES
Mr. Nolte moved to approve the September 10, 2019 minutes as presented. Ms. Renda seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT
Financial report for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 was distributed indicating September expenses of $20.10 for publication of the July 9, 2019 Sister Cities Commission minutes in the Business Record. No action was taken.

Commission Chairperson’s Report
Mr. Nowadzky shared the following written report.

I will be brief. Discussion about traveling to Shijiazhuang in November continues. Meetings with the Mayor, have taken place and continue on the composition of the delegation, and delegation activities. The focus is the kick-off of the Des Moines-Shijiazhuang 35th anniversary celebrations, although there are other Des Moines promotional aspects featured. Please see the Shijiazhuang Committee report.

In September, the President of Ukraine came to the Des Moines metro area. Please see the Vushtrrii and the Pristina reports. I did have the pleasure of representing the City of Des Moines in place of
the Mayor at the Dinner for President Thaci at Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC). The occasion was an opportunity for DMACC to celebrate the Woman in Energy grant it received. There are now 28 Kosovar students in our greater metropolitan area under this grant. Two (2) of them are from our sister city of Pristina.

Also, since the September report, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives of Pella to assist them in establishing a sister city organization in their community.

**Commission Vice Chairperson’s Report**
No update at this time.

**Committee Reports**

*Stavropol Committee*
No update at this time.

*Saint-Etienne Committee*

Dr. Zeff shared the following written report:

Jacques Chirac, the former 2-term President of France and longtime Mayor of Paris, died on September 25, 2019. This is big news all over France. I plan to write a letter from the Sister Cities Commission to their City Council expressing our condolences.

We have had another quiet month. French officials have just returned to work, so we should be able to start some projects soon.

We have called a meeting for the St. Etienne sub-committee for early October.

I am planning a visit to St. Etienne on October 15 and 16.

We are working to connect the opera companies. There has been no response yet to the letter we sent to Robert Selby, our new business connection. I will try to contact him while I am in France.

Dr. Zeff shared that she is traveling to France on non-Commission business, and would like to include a visit to Saint-Etienne to meet with Saint-Etienne municipal officials. Materials and information from businesses to respond to the inquiry made by a particular Saint-Etienne business person, and the Des Moines opera for a possible opera exchange, are being assembled to take along to Saint-Etienne. She will be using accumulated airfare miles, but requested the Commission pay approximately $600 for hotel and train transportation to cover those expenses getting to Saint-Etienne and lodging while there on Commission business. Motion by Ms. Renda for the Commission to reimburse Saint-Etienne City Chair
Zeff up to $600 for the hotel and train expenses while in Saint-Etienne conducting Commission business. Seconded by Mr. Lewis. Motion carried.

Des Moines Public School students will be traveling to Saint-Etienne in April 2020.

**Shijiazhuang Committee**

Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum shared the following written report:

Roger and I had the meeting with Mayor Cownie on September 19 about the upcoming trip to China. While he is very supportive and wishes to go and kick-off the 35th Anniversary celebration, his schedule doesn’t allow that to happen. He proposed a couple other people to go in his place, and he would get back to us.

Since we are not sure who will go and what day they can come on the trip, Roger and I could not book our tickets at this point. We will work on the travel plan as soon as the elected official’s schedule is confirmed.

Shijiazhuang Foreign Affairs Office would like the Mayor to send in a 1-2-minute video showcasing Des Moines for their upcoming Tourism Conference. I’m working with the Mayor’s Office in getting that done.

Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum reported that there is not a confirmed elected official for the trip November 12th through 17th. There are 10 people from various organization that are tentatively signed up for the trip. One of these people is the founder of Baconfest.

The committee made a video with Mayor Cownie congratulating Shijiazhuang on one of their conferences and mentioned the 35th Anniversary.

Mr. Nowadzky stated that this is similar to the situation that happened when traveling to Pristina in June. Committee members waited for confirmation of elected officials to participate and in the delay to accommodate traveling as a delegation, the ticket prices increased in cost for the Commission by nearly doubling in price. He opined that the Commission delegation members need to proceed with the purchase of airfare and hope that an elected official can join us to kick off the 35th Des Moines-Shijiazhuang anniversary celebration.

Ms. Zhao Mandelbaum requested an additional $1,000 to the previously Commission approved $3,000, to pay the administration fees to Iowa Sister States to cover the costs in participating in delegation activities in Beijing and Shijiazhuang. Mr. Nolte moved to fund the trip up to a total to $4,000. Seconded by Ms. Zajicek. Ms. Whisenand raised the question as to how this will impact other Commission travel in this fiscal year. Commission Vice Chairperson Patrick noted that at this time there are no other Commission trips planned for the fiscal year. Mr. Nolte then amended his previous motion to include the Commission funding of up to $4,000 for travel and $1,000 for the payment of the described administrative fees. Seconded by Ms. Zajicek. Motion carried 8-3.

Mr. Nowadzky added that the Shijiazhuang Committee will continue to pursue the possibility of a Des Moines elected official participating in the delegation.

**Pristina Committee**

Mr. Nowadzky shared the following written report:
In September there were discussions about the possibility of sending Des Moines students to next summer’s 2020 TOKA camp in Pristina. Please note from Holley Zajicek’s Norwalk–Vushtrri Report that Norwalk is working with Iowa Sister States, the Consulate and TOKA International Camp to send two (2) Norwalk students and one (1) police officer to the camp next summer. Pristina and Des Moines are just starting the process of identifying matching schools for partnering. This needs to occur prior to the process of establishing connections and building relationships. And the building of relationships and trust needs to occur before entertaining the idea of sending Des Moines students to Kosovo. Hence, the 2021 TOKA camp is the goal.

Also as Hollie mentions in her Vushtrri report, during the third week of September Kosovo’s President Hashim Thaci as well as the Kosovo Ambassador to the United States, Vlora Chitaku were in the greater Des Moines metro area. The day prior to coming to Des Moines, President Thaci met with the President and U.S. officials in the White House. One of the activities that were planned in President Thaci’s visit to our greater Des Moines community but had to be cancelled, was a breakfast meeting with representatives of Kosovo’s Iowa’s sister cities. However, that being said, I did have the opportunity to attend the dinner with President Thaci and Governor Reynolds at DMACC’s celebration of the 28 Women in Energy students from Kosovo to study energy and energy engineering related subjects here in Central Iowa.

**Vushtrri, Kosovo**

Ms. Zajicek shared the following written report:

**Vushtrri-Norwalk Partnership Updates**

- Norwalk is working with Iowa Sister States, the Consulate and TOKA International Camp to send two Norwalk students and one police officer to the camp next summer. Norwalk is also working with Vushtrri on student exchange programs and an initiative to get laptops into the trade schools for student use.
Norwalk and Vushtrri working towards a new program incentivizing local U.S. companies to expand into Kosovo and build commercial operations in Vushtrri’s economic zone (separate from the Kosovo American Economic Zone).

Both police departments in beginning stages of community policing programs and youth related initiatives.

Vushtrri still in building phase of new Norwalk Park in their ancient town center. Hope to unveil at our next Iowa delegation trip. Norwalk in planning and fundraising phase for the future Vushtrri stone bridge to be built in Norwalk’s Holland Park.

Kosovo American Economic City (KAEC) Update

- Have contacted several American (Iowa) arms manufacturers to discuss expanding into Kosovo through the KAEC program. Arms dealers/manufacturers was a request from General Rama and a priority for the Kosovo government.
- Connected JLL, an international development/real estate firm with prime minister’s office to discuss Kosovo’s need for an operator of the entire KAEC property/project.
- Researching and recruiting efforts ongoing for manufacturing, industrial, IT, warehouse/distribution and agri-business related companies to consider this opportunity.
- Recently presented to several large business organizations about the KAEC and continuing to market the program through media outlets.

*Side Note Update: President Thaci and Ambassador Citaku’s visit to the metro went very well (September 18-20). A few pre-planned meetings with the sister city delegates had to be cancelled due to scheduling issues, but President Thaci and Ambassador Citaku did attend meetings with Governor Reynolds, Adjutant General Corell and the National Guard, as well the Kosovo Women in Business group and dinner at DMACC.

Kofu Committee

Mr. Lewis shared that there is a 30th Anniversary of the Japan America Society on October 12, 2019. Information can be found on the Grandview University website. There will be many activities including a panel discussion at noon.

Mr. Spaine shared that the Olympic Torch will be going through Kofu on June 27th and 28th of 2020. Mr. Lewis noted that Kofu is open to have Commission members come anytime. An exploratory committee will be formed to study going during the Olympics.

Italy Committee

No update at this time.

Education Committee

No update at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

No Old Business was discussed at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Nowadzky reported that in conjunction with the World Food Prize there will be 10 foreign language students and two (2) teachers visiting from Shijiazhuang. In conjunction with Iowa Sister States, as in the past, the Commission has been requested to participate and help sponsor taking the students and teachers out for dinner. Ms. Renda made a motion to contribute up to the same amount as last year for the meal (up to $300). Seconded by Mr. Nolte. Motion carried. Ms. Goebel recused herself. Mr. Nowadzky will get
information to the Commission members about the date, time, and details as they are also looking for drivers to get the visitors to the restaurant.

**ADJOURNMENT**
Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Whisenand and seconded by Mr. Nolte. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

**NEXT MEETING**
As Chairperson Nowadzky will be leaving for Shijiazhuang on **November 12, 2019**, the meeting will return to the **5:00 p.m.** start time in the *MacRae Conference Room, Richard A. Clark Municipal Service Center, 1551 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.*