

January 22, 2013

MINUTES
Advisory Commission on International Relationships

Members present: Carol Lindseth, Janet McLeod, Natalia Hager, Cyndi Baker, and Bob Kelly
Guests present: Lynn and Sandra Baker

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM with a quorum present

MINUTES from the last meeting were reviewed. Cyndi moved to accept the minutes as read; Bob Kelly seconded; the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT - Natalia reported \$11,135.66 in the account - no change from the last meeting.

OLD BUSINESS - Sister City/Twinning Society.

Christina has resigned the commission due to a job change and is unable to join as a Sister City member. Discussion centered on sponsoring Robin Baker as the member even though she is not a member of ACIR. Janet moved that ACIR buy the \$50 membership for Robin, seconded by Bob. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - Discussion around the table reviewed who is willing to serve as officers, with each member explaining their availability. The slate of officers agreed upon by the commission for 2013 is:

Carol Lindseth, Chair
Cyndi Baker, Co-Chair
Janet McLeod, Secretary
Natalia Hager, Treasurer

OPEN WORLD HOSTING - Bob passed around a document listing other hostings and the names of communities and those involved. Government funding has not been decided as yet, but it is thought that we could receive a little more if it goes through. According to the agreement from Open World, this year's funding includes an initial \$3,200 for hosting, then an additional \$2,500 after expenses.

Sandy Erickson, guest, presented ideas for the hosting. Our last agricultural hosting did not include actual farmers. The ideas came from what has been done before and the thoughts of young international leaders who wish to increase their network of information and find more information to support their dreams and ideas for agricultural development in their countries.

Hosting Dates: May 21st - 29th. Bob asked us to think of potential home hosts and to give our ideas to him and Sandy. A hosting problem from last year was discussed regarding last minute home cancellations, so we will prepare accordingly. Sandy contacted Tania to see if she is available to be an interpreter, and she has penciled it in pending approval of the commission.

Open World is requiring 32 hours of educational programming during the week, so we need to think of what is unique to our area that can be presented, like pulse cropping, organic products. The last group that came to a Hutterite colony was shocked at what they perceived as "slavery." Two members of the Tajikistan group requested we never show that colony again - they were offended. We need to keep in mind activities that are effective. The rule of law hosting was effective enough that some of the delegates went back and implemented changes in their country because of what they learned.

As for the interpreter, last year's was not as successful; a lot of information was left out, and the delegates were disappointed. We may run into this issue again if the delegates insist on the interpreter speaking their own language instead of Russian.

Bob and Sandy will meet to discuss and brainstorm ideas, and they invite any commission members to get involved in the planning process.

MCIV CONVENTION RELATIONSHIP - Montana Center for International Visitors (Helena group is directed by Ron, who is married to Tania). He wants us to become a member of the organization, but there is a charge. If there are educational opportunities that we could share, we are interested. Sandy will explore this further and report back.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES –Regarding school Geography Bee, Cyndi had conversations with people involved, but the bottom line is we cannot initiate anything; it has to be done through a teacher at a school and then goes to a state level from there. Every school has to pay \$100 to enter; every school supports the costs of their involvement. We should get involved on the state level instead of the local level. We would find the place to host it and get media attention for that. Cyndi will look for a name on the state level (Larry Fink is the state coordinator). State bee is March 30th and National is May 22-24.

Sandy found information about an opportunity through Mark Johnson called Academic World Quest. Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundations support this heavily - and Great Falls is not involved. We could fund a team from Great Falls to go (\$58) - it is like a science or academic bowl. We are too late for this year, but we could get in on this for next year. They would need a coach...Discussion and ideas included recruiting teachers to get involved. We could have a team from only one school or try to put together a community team from city-wide meet. We will read this information and bring our comments at the next meeting. The website is Montana World Affairs.org. The general consensus is that this may be easier than involvement with the Geography Bee. Bob will contact Mr. Anderson, a government teacher at Great Falls High School.

MARK JOHNSON - Library event - February 28th at 7:00 PM. Sandy brought information from a previous Mark Johnson event - sample press release, sample promotion schedule. We could get a phone interview on News & Views. We could take a press release 10 days out and give to Richard Ecke or Peter Johnson at the *Tribune* who would do a good job and then place it in Upcoming Events. Lodging for Mark is at La Quinta; ACIR will pay for his food and mileage as well. We aren't sure if he is bringing his wife. We need to check with him about when he would like to meet up for dinner. His bio is very complete - he has done a phenomenal number of things in his life. He returns to Iran every year, doctoral candidates and such, education trips. Cyndi will host Mark while he is in Great Falls. Cyndi will give an introduction of ACIR at the

presentation just before mark speaks. NOTE: We will have limited ACIR members available for the event as Bob will be gone the 22nd through the end of February. Sandy will be gone a month starting February 2nd. Carol leaves the morning of Feb 28th on business, so three of our team will be gone.

NEW COMMISSION MEMBERS - Closing discussion centered on ideas for recruiting ACIR members. It is better to target individuals with a background and interest rather than a blanket advertisement. Educators, young professionals, are good ideas. A department chair at UGF wrote a letter offering his involvement in ACIR. It could be that he will bring his students to the Mark Johnson presentation. Janet will talk to members of Leadership Great Falls for future members. Everyone needs to invite a guest to the meeting - those who could be potential members.

OTHER IDEAS: We need to get a Facebook page going... Janet will set that up. Carol brought up the idea of targeting naturalized citizens so that when we host one in Great Falls again, we could work through the Federal Courthouse to see if they would allow representatives of ACIR to be there. We could do a gesture of welcome - a small flag, a copy of the constitution, something they don't get from the courthouse.

Mention was made again about the ACIR board taking a trip to Russia. In the past, it was the consensus that we wouldn't use ACIR money for individual expenses but for an interpreter to travel with us.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at the Civic Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet McLeod, Secretary