



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Minutes - Final

International Committee

Monday, May 18, 2026

5:00 PM

Hedgehog Conference Room - City Hall

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:07 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: 8 - Irene Barmore, Michael De Yoe, Art Marson, Larry Sleznikow, Melissa Giefer, Lynn West, Mindy Wiesjahn, Karena Norton

Excused: 6 - Karolyn Bald, Alyson Glenz, Jerry Berns, Dana Young, Thomas Monson, Zakee Pearson

Mission of the International Committee

Chair Marson read the mission: The City of La Crosse International Committee exists as an umbrella committee to advise the Mayor and City Council, to act as a resource on international matters, to advise and recommend future relationships with international cities, and to act as a liaison among the La Crosse sister city relationships.

Approval of Minutes

**Motion by Wiesjahn to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2026 meeting.
Seconded by Norton. Motion carried.**

Treasurer's Report

No report.

Agenda Items:

26-0520

Gifts for Sister Cities

*Sleznikow reported on discussions about purchasing art from local artists. Marson shared that our budget guidelines include \$100 for gifts. Chris Kahlow from the Arts Board joined the meeting to share information about grants offered through the Arts Board. Committee would have to work with an artists, and the artist would apply for funding through the Arts Board. The grant money is used for visual and performing arts in La Crosse. Grants available include the Small Project Grants (\$500), Creating Development Grants (up to \$3,500), and the Community Impact Grant (up to \$10,000). Allison Krzych at the Pump House has gone through the process with local artists and would be a good contact. Grants are awarded bi-annually in January and July. All submission requirements are on the City's website:
<https://www.cityoflacrosse.org/Your-Government/Boards-and-Committees/Arts-Board>
Sleznikow will follow up with Allison Krzych.
Barmore shared information about work underway with a local photography club.
Norton discussed a wood block artist in the area.*

26-0521

Sister City Display in City Hall

Sleznikow met with facilities in City Hall to explore locations to display gifts (art and artifacts). Potential locations include the lobby or entryway - no power source for middle of the lobby. A proposal would need to be brought to the Board of Public Works for approval. Any display case would need to be purchased and arranged by the International Committee. Sleznikow will find out what dimensions of display cases would be allowed and whether funding would come from the International Committee or the city.

26-0522

Global Initiatives Week

Movie Night

International Education Showcase

DeYoe asked the committee about ideas for the Oktoberfest Parade - anything to adjust or add this year? Members expressed support for the current vehicle and displays. This year's parade will be Saturday, September 26 at 10:00 a.m. International Education Week will take place November 16-20, 2026. Wiesjahn and Norton asked committee members to begin watching films and will coordinate this year's International Film Festival. Giefer reported that Viterbo, UWL, and WTC will coordinate the Global Education Showcase for Wednesday, November 18.

[26-0523](#)

Funding Requests

Friedberg Delegation
Global Initiatives Week Funding
Funding for Fest Parade

Oktoberfest Parade Expenses - no requests. Global Initiatives Week Expenses - no requests.

Marson shared that the Sister City dues came to \$810. Motion to approve by Barmore. Seconded by Wiesjahn. Motion carried.

Barmore discussed the upcoming delegation to Friedberg. The Mayor has been invited to join the delegation this year. Barmore discussed a request for \$1,350 to support this visit.

- 1. \$750 to help with airfare for sister city representative**
- 2. \$500 for incidental expenses**
- 3. \$100 for gift**

The committee will wait to vote on this request at the July meeting after updates about the planned Epinal visit that may be postponed. Move to refer to next meeting by DeYoe. Seconded by Wiesjahn. Motion carried.

[26-0107](#)

Sister Cities Brochure Update

No updates.

[26-0311](#)

New City Webpage

Committee members viewed the updated website. Members are encouraged to send updates to Kerry Gloede: gloedek@cityoflacrosse.org.

[26-0313](#)

Future meeting dates

Motion by Giefer to move fall meeting dates to Tuesday, September 29 and Tuesday, November 10 at 5:00 p.m. Seconded by Norton. Motion carried.

26-0108

Sister City and School Reports/Announcements: Bantry, Epinal, Dubna, Forde, Junglinster, Kumbo, Friedberg, Luoyang, La Crosse School District, UW-L, Viterbo, Western

La Crosse School District: Glenz reported that the Hmong Language program at both high schools is expanding, so the teacher will be teaching an overload (extra course) next year.

In third grade at Emerson, they have been reading stories about east Asian cultures and Hmong Culture, and will be continuing learning during AAPI month learning about a person of the day. Students read about the diverse culture between countries in Asia and worked to complete Venn Diagrams about holidays! Third graders also took a virtual field trip around countries in Asia and the Pacific Islands. They learned about the area, its terrain, and cultural traditions.

Eric Martin (Social Studies teacher at Logan HS) is taking a trip to London next fall with students from Logan and leading a local (adult) tour to Ireland this summer which will involve our sister city.

Fourth graders attended the Hmong Education Project held at Lincoln this year. Students participate in activities simulating life in a Hmong village, then fleeing through the jungle, crossing the Mekong River, living in a Thai refugee camp, and receiving permission to move to the US. They also learn about Hmong clothing and language as part of the experience.

Glenz send a poster advertising the La Crosse-Dubna Chess Club to the elementary school librarians and Logan Middle School German teacher who all run chess clubs at their schools in hopes of gaining a few new participants.

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse: Bald reported that nearly 200 study abroad students graduated, along with 10 international students; ~10 exchange students are departing.

Remaining cautiously optimistic about Fall enrollment, pending federal Duration of Status updates.

11 faculty-led programs (~150 students) departing this week/next to locations across Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America.

Welcomed Dr. Swen Schneider (Frankfurt UAS) for a week of AI-focused engagement (he arrived this weekend). Public talk: "AI for Everyone: Skills, Learning and the Future of Work" - May 19, with reception at 4:00 p.m. and remarks 4:30-5:30 p.m. Free and open to the public. Live Stream will also be available. Additional presentations, including UWL AI Summit, scheduled this week for faculty and staff at UWL.

Hessen Ministry delegation visit to Wisconsin in late August; UWL participation potential - details forthcoming.

Viterbo: Giefer reported that they hosted two study abroad socials, one specifically for nursing students (March) and another open to all majors (April).

From March 15 to 31, 11 students completed their 18-day clinical capstone projects in Belize. They rotated through several universities and worked in different hospital departments every few days.

Currently, 15 Viterbo students are in South Africa. Their program runs from May 12 to 29.

On May 19, a group of 10 Nutrition and Dietetics students will depart for Seville, Spain. They will spend two weeks there, from May 19 to June 3, 2026.

We also organized two "Navigating Fulbright" sessions in April and May. The goal was to encourage students and faculty to apply for both Fulbright U.S. Student and Fulbright Scholar programs.

Celebrated the graduation of 19 students from our international and global community.

Estimate that we will bring in 3-6 new international students for fall 2026.

Hosting Art Fair on the Green on Saturday, July 25 from 10:00-5:00 p.m. in Assisi Courtyard at Viterbo University. Hosted by AAUW.

Forde: no report.

Kumbo: Berns reported that at our most recent meeting May 14, Lee Rasch reported that the water project that would assure safe water in Kumbo has finally made it through all the hurdles of approval and funds for the project have been sent to Cameron. This project was a joint project with several Rotary Clubs. Sister Theodosia who is a Superior with Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis of Cameroon visited La Crosse recently. The purpose of her visit was to seek ways in which our Sister City could continue to support projects in Cameroon. Plans include the continuation of offering educational opportunities at Viterbo or Western for students from Cameroon. These would support medical professions. The committee is also exploring ways of supporting projects involving solar energy in Cameroon.

Friedberg: Barmore reported that LAGRA has finalized its new By-laws. There is a preliminary list of delegates planning to go to Friedberg Sept. 14-22.

Luoyang: DeYoe reported that 2027 will be the 30th anniversary of the sister city partnership, and visits are in the works. The committee is having a farewell meal for the visiting scholar from Luoyang.

Bantry: West reported that the 10th annual Coulee Houlie Ceilie on March 28 raised \$2,700 for the Jack and Kathy Lucey Family Fund for Alzheimer's in La Crosse and \$2,700 for Age Friendly Bantry. A check presentation will take place at the International Gardens on Saturday, May 10 at 10:00 a.m. Irishfest is planned for August 7-9, featuring Bantry Bay Mussels. On Tuesday, May 19, 7:30 a.m. on WIZM 1410, Linda Pfaff and Lynn West will discuss LBFA from inception to now.

Epinal: Barmore reported that the annual fundraiser at Le Chateau will be on the French national holiday, July 14. There is a new link between photo clubs here and in Epinal: four exchanges of photos between July 1, 2026 and March 1, 2027, then a display. HS French students here will be hosting 8 students from Epinal July 10-24. There is a new deputy in charge of international relations and exchanges in Epinal. The dates for delegations to celebrate our 40th anniversary have not yet been set.

Dubna: no report.

Luxembourg: Wiesjahn reported that Luxembourg's National Day will be celebrated on June 23 at Myrick Park.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Wiesjahn. Seconded by Barmore. Motion carried.