

Hickory International Council
Thursday, February 18, 2016, 5:30 pm

A regular meeting of the Hickory International Council (HIC) was held on Thursday, February 18, 2016, 5:30 pm, in the Moretz Board Room at the Arts & Science Center of Catawba Valley.

Members Present: Hani Nassar, Marion Love, Jack Crawford, Claire McCrea, Cynthia Ferrell, Toshiaki Satake, Marc Swinnen, Ken Humphreys and Gretchen Oetting

Members Absent: Karl Wolfe, Becky Mich, Bella Fields, Joe Getlein, Alex Mezei and Maria Jose Daily

Guests Present: Eric Brandon, Janie Ugwuegbu, Holly Abdelaziz, Kirin Light and Mary Mitchell

Staff Present: Minutes Clerk Anne Starnes

A quorum was present.

Call to Order: Marion Love, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and welcomed everyone present. She said Hani Nassar had been detained at a work event and would arrive soon.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the previous meeting on January 21, 2016 were distributed to members in advance. No additions or corrections were stated. Ken Humphreys moved, seconded by Jack Crawford, to approve the January minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Introduction of Guests & Board Membership Changes: Guests attending were Eric Brandon, Janie Ugwuegbu and Holly Abdelaziz from Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory High student Kirin Light, and Mary Mitchell from Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG). Self-introductions were made. Dr. Love said Gretchen Oetting was appointed to the HIC by City Council on February 2, 2016, and is now a voting member.

Old Business:

HIC Financial Statement Update – \$4,494.11 currently remains in the 2015-2016 City budget of \$13,500. Mr. Nassar said any funds not spend by June 30, 2016 would return to the City's general fund.

BSA/International Youth Council Update – Jack Crawford said that, last year, the IYC members participated in a “feeding the hungry” service project through St. Albans Episcopal Church. He said Don Hicks attended the Model UN planning meeting last night; he operates a non-profit that provides supplies to area teachers. Mr. Crawford said IYC members plan to assist Mr. Hicks this year as their service project, and it will be recorded on Messengers of Peace, an on-line international service project site.

MUN 2016 Update – Dr. Love said the PANGEA Model United Nations Conference would be hosted by Lenoir-Rhyne University (LRU) on March 8-9, 2016. The three conference partners are LRU, the Boy Scouts organization, and HIC. Mr. Crawford said the IYC has a good team of participants, and they will represent South Korea. Dr. Love said Model UN is a simulation of the United Nations, and almost 150 students are signed up to participate this year. Dr. Love suggested arranging a meeting with the new Hickory High School principal, along with history teacher Ms. Martino, to discuss establishing a UN Club at HHS.

Eric Brandon said the second training session was held last night at LR with 15 participants, including students and HIC members. He said if the two LRU students present, Janie Ugwuegbu and Holly Abdelaziz, are interested in getting involved in Model UN and participating next year, they should let him know. The next training session will be on Wednesday, March 2 in the Cromer Center, 6:00 pm. The

Opening Ceremony will be on Tuesday, March 8, 6:00-7:00 pm in Belk Centrum, and Dr. Love encouraged HIC members to attend. The entire conference is open to the public, but only the student groups may participate in discussions.

HIC Grants –

Awards - Ken Humphreys stated the grant proposal, Hispanic Family Caregiver Project, submitted by the WPCOG Area Agency on Aging, was tabled last month until additional information could be reviewed. Since the previous meeting, members have received e-mails regarding the proposal, and he said it was approved. As a matching grant, they will receive \$496.44, or half of the project expense. Dr. Humphreys said Mary Mitchell wrote the application, and was present tonight. Ms. Mitchell discussed the project and said they appreciate receiving the grant. She said the focus of her job is helping caregivers for older adults, specifically in Catawba County's Hispanic population. Her director informed her that, once the program is underway, funds to continue the program would be included in their future budget, so it is not a short-term project. A check presentation with Ms. Mitchell and HIC members was held and photographed for media use.

Grant Rules for Next Year – The current HIC Grant Rules and Criteria were distributed, and Dr. Humphreys offered comments on how the program is currently structured. He noted that very few grant applications are received annually, and the HIC wishes to support the community by awarding the grants. He questioned if the lack of applications is due to having confusing and restrictive rules and criteria. He said small churches, community organizations, and individuals are discouraged from applying, all which are capable of undertaking a community project. If they believe a cash outlay of \$500 is required, he said many are discouraged at the very start, because they do not have the financial resources on hand to apply. He noted that Mr. Nassar plans to request additional grant funds for the next budget year, in order to increase the grant awards from \$500 to \$750.

Dr. Humphreys asked members for feedback on his comments, which were included in his handout. He addressed possible changes for next year, including emphasizing that a project can cost less than \$1,000 and any matching amount up to \$500 could be requested; accepting in-kind donations at their actual value, as well as volunteer hours, toward the matching portion of funds required; and, allowing the same agency or organization to apply for future grants, if the project is a different one. Marc Swinnen suggested organizations be allowed to re-apply for on-going projects, and members agreed this could be considered.

IFFC 2016 Update – The International Film Festival for Children (IFFC) will be held the week of April 25, 2016, for students in grades 4 through 6. Dr. Love said IFFC Sub-Committee members are Hani Nassar, Gretchen Oetting, and herself. A total of 321 short films, in a range of time lengths from less than 1 minute on up to 35 minutes, were submitted for consideration. The sub-committee has viewed all submitted films and pared them down to a short list. They have not yet identified exactly which films to show students, or the exact breakdown of film minutes and discussion time. Members considered the various options discussed, and offered their opinions. Mr. Nassar said all of the films this year have themes, offering many opportunities for student discussion. He is planning to have a single set of films selected for all public schools to view; Gretchen Oetting will select the films the Hickory Christian Academy students will view. He said the film selections would be complete by the end of March, and submitted to the school systems for approval, well ahead of the festival in late April.

Mr. Nassar said a poster competition is currently underway in the schools, with a February 26 submission deadline. He said HIC members and persons from the arts community would select the winning posters for use in marketing the festival. Cash prizes will be awarded to the students creating the winning posters.

HIC Sub-committees Update – A copy of current sub-committee assignments was distributed to members. Dr. Love asked members to review it later and consider participating in additional events.

HIC Work Plan – Mr. Nassar will present the FY 2016-2017 Work Plan and Budget to City Council on Tuesday, March 1, 2016, 7:00 pm at City Hall. He encouraged members to attend and hear the presentations made by the City’s various boards, commissions, and councils.

HIC Business Cards – Members who have joined since July 1st should let Mr. Nassar know what information to print on their HIC business cards. Marion Love, Gretchen Oetting, Claire McCrae, and Cynthia Ferrell each requested business cards; Joe Getlein joined recently and may also need them.

Hickory Day School Letter Request Update – Mr. Nassar asked if any members had contacted Hickory Day School teacher Nisreen Kothari. Her recent letter had invited any interested HIC members to visit her class and talk with students about celebrations held in their native countries. Ms. Oetting plans to contact her.

New Business:

Strategic Plan Retreat – Dr. Love said a retreat had been proposed as an opportunity for members to discuss their goals, objectives and ideas for the future, outside the 1-hour time limits of the monthly meetings. She said there would be ample time to discuss changes to the on-going HIC programs at the retreat, including the grant program.

Mr. Nassar said other non-profit boards often hold a strategic retreat every few years. He said retreats generally focus on discussing new programs and areas that need improvement. He asked members to let him know if they are interested in spending an afternoon participating in a retreat, and that members would then be selected to participate. Members said they would need to know the date and time before committing. Mr. Nassar said that since the Work Plan for 2016-2017 was already submitted, holding the retreat after July 1 might be the best idea; on the other hand, some programs do not affect the budget. This will be discussed further and a date will be set soon.

Other Business: Mr. Nassar said the City has prepared a check to the Hickory Christian Academy for use of their risers in December, and it would be mailed to them this week.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on Thursday, March 17, 2016, 5:30 pm in the Moretz Board Room at the Arts & Science Center.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Marion Love, Vice-Chair
Hickory International Council

Anne Starnes, Minutes Clerk
City of Hickory