

**Hickory International Council**  
**Thursday, November 20, 2014; 5:30 pm**

A regular meeting of the Hickory International Council (HIC) was held on Thursday, November 20, 2014 at 5:30 pm in the Moretz Board Room of the Arts & Science Center of Catawba Valley.

**Members Present:** Hani Nassar, Ken Humphreys, Marc Swinnen, Marion Love, Karl Wolfe, Alex Mezei, Michael Kuchinsky, Jack Crawford and Becky Mich

**Members Absent:** Toshiaki Satake

**Guests Present:** Neighborhood College participant Gretchen Oetting and International Youth Council member Andrew Dennis

**Staff Present:** Minutes Clerk Anne Starnes

A quorum was present.

**Call to Order:** Hani Nassar, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm and welcomed everyone present.

**Approval of October 16, 2014 Minutes:** Minutes of the October meeting were distributed in advance. Ken Humphreys moved, seconded by Marc Swinnen, to approve the October 16, 2014 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**Introduction of Guests & Membership Changes:** Neighborhood College participant Gretchen Oetting and International Youth Council member Andrew Dennis were introduced to members.

**Old Business:**

**BSA-IYC Update** – Jack Crawford reported on the International Youth Council (IYC). Their meeting tonight is the sign-up for the coming year, immediately following the HIC meeting. He said 30 people sent an RSVP, so they expect a good turn out. They will begin planning for Model UN earlier this year, including teaching the high school students parliamentary procedure, one of the most difficult aspects for the students. He said this year a program would be scheduled for monthly IYC meetings, and Alan Jackson speaks tonight about the Footcandle Film Society and international films. Mr. Crawford asked HIC members to let him know if they are interested in presenting a monthly IYC program next year.

**2014 HIC Grant Application Update** – There have been no 2014 grant applications received, and the deadline is mid-December. Alex Mezei knows someone who may be interested and will direct them to the website. The grants have been awarded by the HIC for the past 3 or 4 years. Members discussed why there is so little interest in applying for the grant money, and agreed that information is not reaching the people who would be interested in applying. Mr. Nassar will contact the 3 superintendents and ask them to share information with their schools. Mr. Crawford said a few IYC members had an idea for a project, and he will send them to the website information. Michael Kuchinsky asked if an Eagle Scout project would qualify, and Dr. Humphrey said their project would need an international connection in order to qualify. Both grants must go to local residents, one each to a recipient in Hickory and Catawba County.

**Romanian Baptist Church Christmas Concert** – Mr. Nassar said the church's concert would be on Saturday, December 20, 2014, 6:30-8:00 pm in the SALT Block auditorium, and refreshments will follow the concert. He said this is just 2 days after the HIC's Christmas Dinner, and asked if members would

prefer changing the date for the dinner; members chose to leave the dinner date as planned. Mr. Nassar will e-mail the concert poster to members for sharing with friends. He said the sound system and projector in the auditorium were recently repaired, so these concerns have been corrected.

HIC Christmas Dinner – The dinner is set for Thursday, December 18, 6:00 pm. Marion Love said that she, Alex Mezei and Marc Swinnen have worked with Thai Lotus on menu plans. She reviewed menu choices and prices, and shared copies of Thai Lotus' menu. Members discussed having either a set buffet menu, requiring a guarantee of 20 people, or an a la carte menu. There are not yet 20 people confirmed to attend, but members would prefer a buffet. Dr. Love will continue working with the restaurant, and double-check with members that are absent today regarding attendance plans; Mr. Nassar will check with City staff members and participants from the Great Decisions program.

Mr. Nassar reminded members to bring a Dirty Santa gift of at least \$10 value for the game after dinner.

2015 Pangea MUN – The Model UN program will be March 9-10, 2015. Dr. Humphreys reviewed plans, saying they met last night and the program is well organized this year. Topics for discussion are listed on the website. They hope to have 15 schools and 200 students participate this year. He said they would order ball caps to sell and coffee cups to give the teachers and volunteers. They hope proceeds from the ball caps will help subsidize the schools' transportation/gas costs, which might encourage their participation. Their next planning meeting will be in mid-December, if needed.

2015 IFFC – The International Film Festival for Children will be held April 27-30, 2015. Mr. Nassar said the school systems currently have the student logo competition underway. Details are on the website, and the contest runs through the end of December. He has requested at least 10 entries per class and there will be 3 winners in each grade level of 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, with 9 prizes totaling \$1,000 given to students.

The plan for the 2015 festival: Hickory Public Schools students, private school and home-schooled students will attend the festival at the SALT Block Auditorium, Catawba County Schools students will attend at the Maiden High School auditorium, and Newton-Conover Schools students will attend at the Newton-Conover Middle School auditorium. Mr. Nassar said the schedule minimizes travel, and he expects 8,000 students will participate this year. Short films are still being considered, 10-15 minutes in length, appropriate for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. He asked members to offer suggestions.

Dr. Kuchinsky suggested the 9 winning logos could be printed on card stock and packaged with envelopes, then sold as a fund-raiser to support a chosen cause. Suggested recipients for these funds were the children's wards at the local medical centers, underprivileged children in the local schools, or books purchased for the library.

HIC Attendance Record Update – Mr. Nassar is keeping an attendance record, since the City of Hickory has an attendance clause stating members missing 3 consecutive meetings should be dropped. He will send a letter to any member missing more than 50% total of meetings, asking if they are committed to the HIC. The attendance record will be sent to the City at the end of the fiscal year.

Update on Library Books in Honor of Mr. Cabiri – Mr. Nassar shared a list of the 22 books for the library, purchased with HIC's \$500 donation to memorialize former HIC member Bawol Cabiri, a native of Ghana. A paper bookplate was placed in each book. Either Dr. Love or Mr. Nassar will send a note and the book list to Mr. Cabiri's daughter, letting her know the HIC honored him in this way.

### **New Business:**

FY 2015-2016 Work Plan – Mr. Nassar asked for new ideas for HIC's next work plan. He said the Council has a very comprehensive annual plan of programs or projects, and was not suggesting any be

dropped, but members may choose to add others. He said the Arts Council has added a requirement that a security guard must be on duty in the Keiser Community Room for all meetings after 6:00 pm; the fee must be paid by the organization holding the meeting. He hopes this can be waived for HIC programs held there.

Suggestions for 2015-2016 were:

- Mr. Nassar suggested the group discuss all 8 of the “Great Decisions” topics, since the participant interest exists.
- Dr. Love said that Lenoir, NC has a niche business raising sturgeon for caviar. She contacted them and asked if members could take a tour; they do not conduct single tours, but do conduct group tours. Dr. Humphreys said the business is operated by UNC. She will check into it, and noted she was not suggesting this particular tour be taken by members annually, but some type of annual tour could be interesting.
- Mr. Nassar suggested members attend a retreat, something the HIC has not done before, possibly on a Saturday morning, and members agreed. He said next year it could be held to discuss the FY 2016-2017 work plan.

Additional ideas should be shared at the January meeting, or e-mailed to him. The new work plan must be turned in during February and presented to City Council in March.

**Next Meeting:** The Christmas Dinner will take the place of the December meeting. It will be held Thursday, December 18, 2014, 6:00 pm, at Thai Lotus restaurant in Viewmont.

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, January 15, 2015, 5:30 pm in the Moretz Board Room at the Arts & Science Center.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

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Hani Nassar, Chair  
Hickory International Council

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Anne Starnes, Minutes Clerk