

Annual Meeting Minutes
Saturday, October 9, 2021, 10-11:30 a.m.
Online Zoom Meeting

Present: Corry Bertelsen, Roger Bertelsen, Cheryl Binzen, Marybeth Buchele, Jerry Byg, Kueier Chung, Sedahlia Crase, Dorothy Dake, Dennis Dake, Margaret Epplin, Peggy Faden, Polly Gilbert, Ann Hein, Ginny Huntington, Stu Huntington, Carole Magilton, Joan Mathews, Judith Mongin, Barbara Schwarte, Lee Smithson, Robert Strahan, Lynne Van Valin, Linda White, Bernie White, Karen Wilson

1. President Crase called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.
2. 24 members were present, which Secretary Epplin declared a quorum.
3. Epplin added approval of the 2019 Annual Meeting minutes to the Agenda. Crase requested that the Agenda be re-ordered to put the Nomination Committee report after Approval of Minutes.

Binzen **moved** to approve the amended Agenda, Mathews **seconded**. **Motion carried.**

4. Approval of Minutes of 2020 Annual Meeting

Mathews **moved** to approve the minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting, Hein **seconded**. **Motion carried.**

Strahan requested an amendment to the 2019 Annual Meeting minutes to add "... at which the Belles of Iowa State provided a singing program..." in the Activities section after "...at the Annual Meeting/35th Anniversary Celebration..."

Mathews **moved** to approve the amended minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting, Hein **seconded**. **Motion carried.**

5. Nomination Committee

Lynne Van Valin, Alta Byg, and Jerry Byg served on the Nomination Committee. The club is still looking for a member to be willing to serve as Vice President. There were no self-nominations.

Epplin said she would continue to serve as Secretary.

Mathews **moved** that nominations cease and that we cast a unanimous ballot for Secretary Epplin. Hein **seconded**. **Motion carried.**

Strahan **moved** that the FFCI Board be authorized for the remainder of 2021 to fill the position of Vice President without full club voting if a suitable candidate is found. Mathews **seconded**. **Motion carried.**

As reported in 6 c below, Dennis Dake volunteered to do newsletters in 2022.

6. Officer and Committee Reports (receive or approve)

- a. Treasurers' report: Alta and Jerry Byg, Co-Treasurers

J Byg shared his screen showing the Treasurer's report since November 1, 2019. Through October 8, 2021. The report showed 2020 dues of \$1,710 and 2021 dues of \$1,659 as the income for the club. FFCI voted to make a \$3,000 donation to FFI to help FFI get through the Covid pandemic, and this expense was paid in 2020. The report also showed the payment of FFCI membership dues to FFI for 2019 (\$1,320) and 2020 (\$1,140). The beginning checkbook balance on November 1, 2019, was \$7,112.19. The ending balance on October 8, 2021, was \$4,769.59

The Treasurer's report was received by the membership.

b. Membership Committee report: Joan Mathews, Membership Chair

Mathews reported one new couple joined in 2021. The final membership count for 2021 was 54, down 3 from 2020. Mathews is completing her term as Membership Chair and a new Membership Chair will need to be found.

Cruse announced that FFI will raise dues to \$25 in 2021 and to \$30 in 2022 and this will possibly influence the FFCI dues. FFCI charges \$30 and didn't raise dues in 2021 due to Covid and no outbound or inbound journeys.

Members offered varying ideas about the amount that FFCI should charge for membership. Some of these ideas were: keep the FFCI dues amount the same at \$30, increase the FFCI dues to \$35, offer members the opportunity to voluntarily pay a greater amount. The Board will make a decision on dues at its November 13 meeting.

c. Communication Committee report

- Historian: Joan Herwig, who had served in this position several years, resigned in March 2021; the position was not filled. Historic FFCI records are currently held at the Cruse home.

G Huntington suggested FFCI consider digitizing the boxes of materials so storage does not become a burden, and the Board will consider this. Hein added that the Ames History Museum knows how to do this and perhaps FFCI could donate to the Ames History Museum and they could do it for FFCI.

- Information Technology -- New website: <https://ffcentraliowa.org/> Margaret Epplin

Epplin reported that the Friendship Force of Central Iowa website is up and running. Any suggestions for the site are welcome. All the minutes of meetings, newsletters, ByLaws and Policies and Procedures are posted on the site. Epplin thanked James Ecklund, who has been involved with FFCI's website from its inception many years ago, for helping her get the FFCI website updated.

- Newsletter: Dennis Dake volunteered to do newsletters in 2022.

Diana Oppedal guest edited a newsletter in 2020 and the newsletter is posted on the FFCI website.

Mathews asked that all newsletters from other clubs be sent to entire membership.

- Publicity: position was not filled in 2021. Chung sent FFCI pictures and articles to the "Sun."

d. Activities Committee report: Corry Bertelsen and Charene Starcevic, Co-Chairs

Bertelsen and Starcevic presented their annual report of 2021 FFCI activities. Despite the Covid challenge, Bertelsen and Starcevic planned outdoor socially-distanced activities or Zoom activities. The list of activities planned is impressive and all activities had excellent attendance by members. The February Zoom talent sharing had 22 members participating and lasted 2.5 hours. On June 23, 33 FFCI members met at Ada Hayden for a lunch catered by Hickory Park. August 17, 26 members met at Brookside Park for a buffet of 10 different desserts. On October 3, 23 members attended a concert at Ames City Hall by Lake Wobegon Brass Band. After the concert, members met at Della Viti for drinks and appetizers. FFCI members Polly Gilbert and Lee Smithson invited this all-volunteer, non-profit Lake Wobegon Brass band to perform in Ames; it was the band's first concert in 2 years due to the pandemic.

Many members expressed great appreciation to Bertelsen and Starcevic for their creativity and for providing so many fun activities in 2021 despite the pandemic. Bertelsen suggested perhaps one member could plan one event a year.

Mongin informed the membership that the Holiday Party can't be held at Mongin's location where it has been held in previous years. There will be a possible FFCI holiday activity in December.

7. Discussion of the ongoing status of FFCI led by Bob Strahan, Past Co-President

Note: The current Board of Directors will vote on the club's ongoing status at its last regularly scheduled meeting, November 13, 2021.

Strahan reiterated that FFCI continues to have difficulty filling offices, committee chairs, and journey leadership positions. Strahan is encouraged that FFI is currently being revitalized and streamlined, aiming to make individual member and club operations easier. Strahan asked members to give opinions about the club's viability.

Mathews noted that the issue of viability has gone on for 4 or 5 years. Past membership chairs have tried various ways to increase memberships. The number of members hasn't decreased much even during the pandemic, but there have been few new members. Most of the current members have held leadership positions.

Strahan noted that FFCI activities are well attended, but the main difficulty is getting people to join the Board. The current FFCI membership is not particularly young, and most members have done a lot.

Dennis Dake noted the club needs continuous new members.

There was mention of combining with another club, such as the Des Moines club.

G Huntington said she and S Huntington have recently gone on several tours, but tourist infrastructure isn't available in the rest of the world. FFCI can uniquely offer a safer option with in-home-based travel which commercial companies can't do right now. G Huntington also noted that there are a lot of people who have just retired, and this is a good source of potential members FFCI can attract. Crase agreed that the number of ISU retirees is double previous years, and the newest retirees took early retirement making them a lot younger than our current membership.

8. *Be the Bridge* FFI is experimenting with this new initiative to assist clubs in finding ways to work in their home communities to be a bridge between people and cultures; nice materials are being developed. Future: Do we want to be a test site for *Be the Bridge*? Issue: wait until we decide if club will exist in 2022 (see note above about Board's November decision).

9. Members need to sign-in to new FFI portal at: my.friendshipforce.org/users/sign_in (There is an underscore between "sign" and "in" above). Once you go there, follow the instructions to log in and then you'll be able to receive communications, make any payments to FFI, and generally communicate as a member. Sedahlia will hold small groups to assist those who haven't signed in. Watch for details.

10. FFI has posted a large number of virtual journeys on their website. To find these virtual events or to ask questions or find other information, go to support@friendshipforce.org.

11. Report of usual activities/events that Covid-19 prevented us from doing, or we voted not to do due to Covid-19

- a. 2020 and 2021 Journeys, inbound and outbound, international and domestic, were all cancelled in 2020, and FFCI did not ask for any in 2021. So far, FFCI has not requested any 2022 journeys.

Members are encouraged to journey with other clubs who have available space. These journeys can be found on the FFI website.

- b. 2021 World Friendship Day celebration was not held.
- c. 2020 Holiday party was not held.
- d. 2021 Regional conferences were not held.
- e. Board of Directors' retreat was not held.
- f. LEOs (Let's Eat Out) were not held.
- g. There is no program at today's Annual Meeting.
- h. All Iowa FF Picnic. On Sunday, September 19, 2021, Friendship Force of Greater Des Moines (FFGDM) hosted the All-Iowa Friendship Force Clubs Picnic from noon to 3 at Fort Des Moines Park. The Dakes and Crase attended the event which included members from all the Iowa clubs, plus members of the Dayton, OH club who were being hosted by the FFGDM club that week. It was a good opportunity to see people we knew and meet new ones

12. Announcements/The Good of the Order

Several members shared that they had breakthrough Covid. Other members shared the birth of new grandchildren and travel. Everyone get well and stay safe.

President Crase requested members to send all thoughts and concerns anytime.

13. Motion to adjourn until October 2022

Dorothy Dake **moved to adjourn the meeting**. Mongin **seconded**. Motion **carried**.

The next Annual Meeting will be held in October 2022.