



Council Report

Report Number: CLK2026-007
Meeting Date: April 21, 2026
Title: **Kawartha Lakes-Nayoro Twinning Committee**
Description: Re-establishment and re-naming of the Lindsay-Nayoro Twinning Committee as a Volunteer Management Committee
Author and Title: Constance Ellison, Executive Assistant to Mayor and Council

Recommendation(s):

That Report CLK2026-007, **Kawartha Lakes-Nayoro Twinning Committee**, be received;

That the Lindsay-Nayoro Twinning Committee be re-established as a Volunteer Management Committee known as the Kawartha Lakes-Nayoro Twinning Volunteer Management Committee; and

That the Terms of Reference appended to CLK2026-007 as Appendix A be adopted.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

The Lindsay-Nayoro Twinning Committee was first established in 1970 through the Lindsay Chamber of Commerce. The purpose was to solidify and foster a long-term 'sister-city' relationship with the city of Nayoro, Japan through cultural exchanges and celebrations of friendship. The commitment to this relationship has endured with student exchanges occurring regularly and events and delegations being hosted for special occasions, such as the 50th anniversary in 2019.

Aside from the dedication of Nayoro park in honour of this relationship, the Twinning Committee is mostly responsible for the student exchange program that facilitates one or two students from (traditionally) Lindsay to Nayoro every other year, with students from Nayoro being hosted here in the off years. The Committee was chaired for many years by Heather Newman, who was a recipient of the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, for her dedication to Canada-Japan relations largely through her work on this committee. When Ms. Newman stepped away from the committee, a lot of the momentum of the group went with her.

More recently the Committee has been chaired by Dylan Robichaud, a former exchange student, and the group has expressed an interest to re-affirm the City's commitment to the 'sister-city' relationship, with the full support of their counterparts in Nayoro, who themselves are dedicated to renewing and cementing this long-held friendship. To best fulfill this desire, it is recommended that the City re-establish this committee in a more formal way as a Volunteer Management Committee, and take the opportunity this year to re-name it to reflect our identity as Kawartha Lakes and to ensure all students in our municipality have the opportunity to take part in the student exchange program.

This report addresses the recommendation to formalize the committee as a Volunteer Management Committee with accompanying Terms of Reference, and the re-naming of the group.

Rationale:

The CAO and the Mayor met with the current Chair of the Committee to discuss the future of the Twinning Committee and how best to move forward with the group. The Chair expressed a desire on behalf of the current committee to have a more formal structure and a more official relationship with the City. He also relayed that his counterparts in Nayoro have expressed a similar desire to form a more official relationship with the City. The City of Nayoro has a department dedicated to International Relations, and while this is not something needed here, the relationship

may appear to be more heavily invested in by Nayoro in comparison to what is currently in place here. In light of this, and the long-established history of the Twinning Committee, the Mayor suggested that it was time to re-affirm our relationship with Nayoro and the CAO agreed that a more formal structure was warranted.

The current committee has a Chair and a Treasurer and holds ad-hoc meetings to facilitate the student exchange; however, formal minutes and reporting to Council has not regularly occurred for some time. The Chair acknowledged that given public funds are used to fund the student exchange program, it is more than appropriate to have some kind of agreement in place to prompt regular reporting back to Council in order to maintain accountability and transparency.

What is being proposed is a structure that would allow some degree of autonomy for the committee to solicit applications and oversee the student exchange program. The City currently has a number of Volunteer Management Committees that allow for this type of involvement by members of the community. These committees, unlike Committees of Council, select from their members a Chair and Secretary, with no members of Council appointed to the Committee. While meetings still need to adhere to Open and Closed meeting rules under the Municipal Act, 2001, there is more flexibility in terms of structure and members can take on community-based projects such as the Exchange Program. Committees of Council, on the other hand, are far more formal, have Council members appointed to the committee, and are largely advisory in nature. Since the City is not itself running the exchange program, this Volunteer Management Committee structure more easily lends itself to the aims of the Twinning Committee. The Terms of Reference would still require an annual report back to Council, and this would satisfy both the City's and the Committee's desire to be more accountable for the public funds being used.

Finally, the recommendation to update the name from Lindsay-Nayoro to Kawartha Lakes-Nayoro reflects the City's new identity and will help to encourage students from across Kawartha Lakes to participate in the student exchange program. As this year is our 25th Anniversary, it is appropriate to take the opportunity to update this aspect of the Committee and to make it more inclusive. As part of this initiative, a new webpage on the City website has been created to highlight both the historical nature of this 'sister-city' relationship and the student exchange program. It is a space that the City can use to update residents on events and memorabilia as well as the student exchange program. It will also include a new email address, nayoro@kawarthalakes.ca, for use by the Committee and the Mayor's Office to receive applications and correspondence relating to the Twinning Committee. These steps not only consolidate and articulate what the Committee is and what they do, but it also signals to our counterparts in

Nayoro that this relationship is one that is valued and respected. These steps elevate what is currently an ad-hoc committee to a committee with status and structure; further, it establishes it as part of the City's organization for the future, ensuring it remains a viable and integral part of our cultural fabric moving forward.

Other Alternatives Considered:

Council could opt to re-establish the Twinning Committee as an Advisory Committee of Council; however, the main objective and activity of the committee is to facilitate a student exchange as a community benefit, rather than advise Council on relations with Nayoro or Japan. This option is not recommended as the structure of a Volunteer Management Committee is less formal and more arms-length to the City. An Advisory Committee would require more staff time and resources.

At the other end of the spectrum, Council could opt not to re-establish the committee at all and let it continue as a group with only informal ties to the City. This is not recommended, as the City provides funding for the student exchange program, and it is appropriate for the committee to have a responsibility to report to Council on the successes of the program. The Volunteer Management Committee structure requires at least an annual report and would provide members with insurance provisos and ensures further transparency and accountability. Choosing to remain status quo is therefore not recommended.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

This recommendation supports these strategic priorities:

1. An Exceptional Quality of Life
2. A Vibrant and Growing Economy
3. Good Government

The re-establishment of the Twinning Committee reaffirms the City's dedication to supporting community initiatives and the student exchange is a great example of fostering new opportunities for our youth, but it also champions the cultural exchange of ideas and friendship. The 'sister-city' relationship has been part of the fabric of Kawartha Lakes for over 50 years and it is a relationship that is worth not just preserving but celebrating.

The original intent of the Twinning with Nayoro was to encourage not just cultural, but also economic, ties. With many students coming to our area to experience a Canadian,

and specifically Kawartha lifestyle, the economic benefits are felt by businesses, educational institutions, and the municipality as a whole. This connection with Nayoro encourages delegations from Japan to our area, a close relationship with the Consul-General of Japan, and creates associations that can last a lifetime. Some of these benefits are less tangible, but no less real, and significant.

Using the Volunteer Management Committee model, re-establishing this committee under a new name, Kawartha Lakes-Nayoro Twinning Volunteer Management Committee not only reflects the wider inclusion of students City-wide, but it also formalizes a relationship between the Committee and the City and provides a more robust opportunity for reporting to Council and meeting our goals of transparency and accountability.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

Re-establishing the Twinning Committee as a Volunteer Management Committee with a new name does not have any financial impact. The funding that supports the student exchange is already accounted for in the annual budget.

Consultations:

Mayor
City Clerk
CAO

Attachments:

Appendix A – Kawartha Lakes-Nayoro Twinning Volunteer Management Committee
Terms of Reference



KLNTC Terms of
Reference

Department Head email: rtaylor@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Ron Taylor