

**Red Wing Sister Cities Commission
Workshop
Community Development Building**

April 23, 2025

Members Present: Commissioners Ingrid Hokanson, Renee Kreye, Kim Clancy, Tao Peng, Sheena Whitlock, and Tammy Jaynes

Members Absent: Chair Austin Knott; Commissioners Shawn Niebeling and Maura Curry, Student Advisory Member Silas Perau

Others Present: Lisa Acker, Staff Liaison; Vicki Jo Lambert, Council Liaison; Gary Iocco, Mayor

1. Roll Call

The workshop was convened by Vice Chair Jaynes at 5:15 p.m. Staff Liaison Acker reported that the absences of Chair Knott, Commissioners Niebeling and Curry, and Student Advisory Member Perau were excused.

2. Public Comment

Mayor Iocco thanked Sister Cities Commission members for their service. He stated that he hosted an Ikata delegation in the past and would be willing to do that again. The dates of the Ikata delegation visit in August were discussed. Staff Liaison Acker referenced Sister Cities Commission vacancies, noting that the terms of three current members will end in December. Member residency requirements were clarified. Mayor Iocco encouraged interested applicants to contact him.

3. Workshop Items

A. Sister Cities Gifts Discussion.

Staff Liaison Acker discussed the gifts that the City has received from its Sister Cities of Ikata and Quzhou over the years. She stated that construction work that will be occurring at City Hall has necessitated the need to remove Sister Cities gift items from Council Administrator's office and find a new location to store or display these items.

Robin Wipperling, Executive Director of the Goodhue County Historical Society, summarized a recent conversation she had with her staff and Deputy Public Works Director Patrick Ramaker about the gift items. She stated that the Historical Society lobby is currently empty and that the Historical Society could host a Sister Cities gift exhibit through the end of August.

Staff Liaison Acker reported that Council Administrator Chirs Heineman has expressed an interest in displaying some of the gift items in his office along with other art pieces after the construction project has been completed. Staff Liaison Acker suggested discussion of options for a secure, long-term display of gift items, so that the public can view them.

Director Wipperling also discussed a major renovation project involving the former Red Wing City Hospital with assistance from the nonprofit organization, Friends of the Friedrich Civic Center. She stated that gift items could potentially be stored in the lower level of this building.

Mayor Iocco commented that he spoke with Pottery Museum representatives, who indicated an interest in a gift display. Council Liaison Lambert also suggested contacting the Red Wing Area Seniors about a potential display at Pier 55. Staff Liaison Acker commented that offers to display items for six months or longer would be more beneficial than month-long displays. Mayor Iocco summarized a conversation he had with Council Administrator Heineman about potentially building shelving units on which to display a traveling exhibit.

Director Wipperling offered assistance with obtaining archival products in which to store gift items. Security precautions for public displays were discussed. Mayor Iocco suggested a display at the Depot. Director Wipperling also suggested contacting the Anderson Center about an exhibit.

Council Liaison Lambert asked whether an inventory has been created, and Staff Liaison Acker provided information in this regard. Council Liaison Lambert commented that there is a painting in the office of Library Director Dan Brower that was gifted to the City.

The next steps in the process of working with the Historical Society were discussed, and volunteer assistance from the Sister Cities Commission was suggested. Commissioners expressed appreciation to Director Wipperling for the offer of assistance.

B. April Finance Report.

Staff Liaison Acker reviewed the Finance Report and announced a recent \$2,000 donation from the American Legion to assist the Red Wing Ikata exchange students. She also discussed the results of recent grocery bagging activities.

Staff Liaison Acker referenced Sister Cities Commission budget adjustments. She noted that prize money that had been allocated toward the YAAS competition could be reallocated for other purposes, such as archival materials.

Commissioner Jaynes asked about the tree planting process and expense, and Staff Liaison Acker provided information in this regard.

C. Ikata Student Exchange Committee Report.

Committee members provided updates. Host family arrangements were discussed.

Travel arrangements were discussed. It was noted that all of the students will be traveling to the U.S. together and will arrive in Red Wing on August 1st. Staff Liaison Acker stated that she will work with CIR Andrew and the travel agent to book the flights and arrange for bus transportation. The exchange dates were reviewed.

Plans for the welcome dinner and the farewell picnic were discussed. It was suggested to invite sponsor representatives to attend the welcome dinner in appreciation of their generous donations. The budget was referenced, and Staff Liaison Acker indicated that funds can be reallocated to different events.

The preliminary activity schedule was reviewed. The need for volunteer assistance was discussed. The benefits of free time were noted.

Potential cultural and educational opportunities for the Red Wing students prior to the trip were discussed. It was noted that the Red Wing students and chaperone have been invited to attend the May Sister Cities Commission meeting.

D. YAAS Committee Report.

The discussion that occurred during the March Sister Cities Commission meeting was summarized. Communication with Red Wing teacher Kristin Bray and the student participants was discussed along with plans to distribute the certificates of appreciation.

E. Adult Delegation / Friendship Exchange Committee Discussion.

Staff Liaison Acker provided background information and referenced past discussion of a potential 2025 adult delegation to Quzhou. She stated that, while interest has been expressed in an adult delegation to Quzhou this fall, a Sister Cities Commission committee would be needed to manage the process. She shared her opinion that the short timeframe, limited staff resources, and other factors would make a 2025 delegation challenging. Commissioner Peng discussed past delegations.

Commission members suggested delaying an adult delegation or friendship exchange with Quzhou until 2026, to allow adequate planning time. Commissioner Peng further discussed the process and logistical considerations. He offered to provide assistance, even after his term on the Sister Cities Commission ends in December of 2025. He also suggested working with the Anderson Center on a potential future educational exchange and friendship delegation.

A response to Quzhou representatives regarding the invitation was discussed, and Commissioner Peng offered suggestions in this regard.

4. Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 6:20 p.m.