



Our Vision

Red Wing thrives as a vibrant, creative river town that values its natural environment, welcomes all people, and unlocks opportunity for everyone.

Our Mission

We strive to create a sustainable, healthy, accessible, resilient, and equitable community where every person feels at home.

Meeting Announcement and Agenda Sister Cities Commission Regular Meeting City Council Chambers, 315 West 4th Street, Red Wing, MN & Virtually Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at 5:15 PM

This meeting will be held in the City Hall Council Chambers and virtually via Webex at the same time. Members of the public can join this meeting either in person at City Hall or virtually. To join this meeting via Webex, [click this link](#). To join via telephone, please dial (415) 655-0001. Enter access code 2559 131 9617 and password 2025 when prompted.

1. Call to Order

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

3.A. Please welcome new commission members Danielle DeWitt and Ashlyn Werner to the Sister Cities Commission. Ashlyn is unable to attend as she is currently with the Red Wing exchange students in Ikata, Japan. The Commission is still looking for at least two more full commissioners to join us.

4. Approval of Agenda

4.A. A motion, second and majority approval is required to adopt the agenda

5. Approval of Minutes

5.A. Motion to approve meeting minutes from May 28, 2025. - A motion, second and majority approval is required.

6. Public Comment

We now invite anyone to share their thoughts on a topic that is not on the agenda. We welcome all opinions and ideas. We appreciate you stating your name at the lectern, and please remember that personal attacks may be ruled out of order. You will have up to three minutes to comment, and we appreciate your time in coming tonight.

7. Motions & General Business - Committee Reports

7.A. Finance Report - Lisa

7.B. Ikata Student Exchange Committee Report and Update

7.B.1. Provide commissioners with an update on plans and final activity schedule for the student exchange in Red Wing

- River City Days Parade plans
- Welcome Dinner - Colvill Courtyard (needs, expenses, time, gifts for students and chaperon)
- Farewell Picnic - Baypoint (needs, expenses, time)
- Saints Game, MOA, any other changes to the schedule
- Any requests for assistance or transportation needs for any of the events while students are in Red Wing.

7.B.2. Discuss and Vote on any additional expenditures for Ikata student visit to Red Wing (i.e. MOA event)

7.C. Ikata/Quzhou Friendship Delegation Update - Lisa

It appears there is interest from the City Administration to send a government delegation to Quzhou in 2026. However, I am still awaiting final confirmation on that and final edits from the City Administrator on an e-mail response to Quzhou. We did receive another invitation from Quzhou to attend the 7th China- U.S. Sister Cities Conference from October 24-28 in Hangzhou. This was also passed along to the City Administrator. This committee will also need more members if we do move forward with planning a delegation visit in 2026 to Quzhou. It currently has just one member on it.

7.D. Young Artists and Authors Showcase Committee (YAAS) - Committee is in need of a new chair and additional members as 3/4 of the committee is at the end of their second term on the commission. The new theme has not yet been determined but for more information on the program, check out: <https://sistercities.org/yaas/2025>. Let Lisa know if you would like to be a part of this committee.

7.E. Community Visibility - Lisa and Sheena

Lots of opportunities coming up to share photos and events on social media around the student exchange to Ikata and when the Ikata students are in Red Wing.

8. Communication Items

8.A. **November Meeting Date or Time Change needed** - We always end up having to change our scheduled meeting date due to the holidays in November and December. However, moving our meeting to a week earlier in November puts us in the Council Chambers on the same night as Arts & Culture Commission. If we keep the meeting on November 19th, then we need to change the start time to 4:30 pm to make sure our meeting is done before theirs starts at 5:30 pm. Other options would be to move it to Wednesday, November 12 at 5 pm, Thursday, November 20 at 5:15 pm, or leaving it on Wednesday, November 26th at 5:15 (if we can make sure we will have a quorum).

9. Adjournment

Accommodations for signing interpreter, Braille, large print, etc. can be made. Call City Hall at 385.3600 seven days prior to the need. Hearing assistance devices are available during meetings.

**Red Wing Sister Cities Commission
Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers**

May 28, 2025

Members Present: Chair Austin Knott; Commissioners Shawn Niebeling, Ingrid Hokanson, Renee Kreye, Sheena Whitlock, and Tammy Jaynes

Members Absent: Commissioners Maura Curry, Tao Peng, and Kim Clancy

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

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Knott at 5:15 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Knott led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Staff Liaison Acker reported that Commissioners Curry, Peng, and Clancy were unable to attend the meeting.

4. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Chair Knott, seconded by Commissioner Kreye and unanimously carried, to approve the agenda as presented.

5. Approval of Minutes

A. Approve Meeting Minutes from March 26, 2025.

B. Approve Workshop Minutes from April 23, 2025.

A motion was made by Chair Knott, seconded by Commissioner Jaynes and unanimously carried, to approve the meeting and workshop minutes as drafted.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Motions & General Business

A. Ikata Student Exchange Committee Report and Introduction of the 2025 Ikata Student Delegation.

Commissioner Jaynes asked the students and the chaperone to introduce themselves and describe their expectations of the student exchange experience.

Nisha Santiago introduced herself and described her family and interests. She thanked the Sister Cities Commission for the opportunity to participate in the Ikata student exchange and stated that she is honored to have been selected.

Ms. Santiago stated that she looks forward to gaining a greater understanding of the culture, the language, and the living situation in Ikata. She stated that she traveled to Germany in 2024 as part of an exchange student program.

Marek Sparby introduced himself and described his family and interests. He discussed his interest in the Ikata student exchange, stating that he has always wanted to travel to Japan. He stated that he looks forward to experiencing the culture and daily life along with nature and the summer season in Ikata. He stated that he hopes to create global friendships. He thanked the Sister Cities Commission for the opportunity.

Audrey Larson introduced herself and described her family and interests. She stated that she wanted to participate in the Ikata student exchange because she loves to travel. She stated that she had an opportunity to go on a band trip to Italy in 2024. She commented that she likes experiencing different cultures and looks forward to staying with a host family.

Isabella Paradis introduced herself and described her family and interests. She stated that she wanted to participate in the Ikata student exchange because she has always loved learning about new cultures, stating that the only way to overcome ignorance is through knowledge. She stated that she is excited for the trip and hopes to learn many things from the other students, the guide, and the host family.

Chaperone Ashlyn Werner introduced herself. She stated that she is honored to serve as the chaperone and travel to Japan with a group of exceptional students. She expressed appreciation for the opportunity to immerse herself in a new culture and gain first-hand experience with a different way of life. She stated that she loves to learn and loves to teach. She stated that she hopes to bring back valuable insights to share with the Red Wing community. She thanked the Sister Cities Commission for putting their trust in her to guide and support the exchange students as they represent Red Wing.

Commissioner Kreye reported that host family arrangements have been made for the Ikata students. She reviewed the travel schedule, noting that the Ikata students and the Red Wing students will travel back to the U.S. together. She noted that the cost of the airfare came in significantly below the anticipated amount. She stated that grocery bagging activities have been going well and that the students are in the process of raising the necessary funds to cover their trip expenses. Commissioner Hokanson commented regarding a recent meeting with the students and Gretchen Anderson. Commissioner Kreye reported that Gretchen Anderson will be organizing a student and parent meeting to take place at the end of June.

Commissioner Kreye discussed the welcome dinner on August 4 and a farewell picnic on August 10. She invited Sister Cities Commission members to attend and stated that assistance is requested with set-up and clean-up activities.

Commissioner Jaynes reviewed the tentative activity schedule. Staff Liaison Acker indicated that she will take care of the River Cities parade application. Assistance with a potential St. Paul Saints game activity was requested. The potluck sign-up process was discussed.

Staff Liaison Acker provided additional information regarding a potential Saints game outing, including ticket purchases and transportation. She suggested discussing this with the host families. Chaperone Ashlyn Werner offered to assist with transportation and help organize a Saints game outing.

B. Young Artists and Authors Showcase Update.

Staff Liaison Acker commented that new committee members will be needed for the 2026 competition and reviewed the responsibilities of this committee. Commissioner Niebeling provided additional information.

Staff Liaison Acker stated that she sent an email to Kristin Bray, thanking her for her help and informing her that no individual placement awards were given this year.

C. Sister Cities Commission Gift Collection Update.

Staff Liaison Acker summarized discussion with representatives of the Goodhue County Historical Society on May 15. She stated that Gretchen Anderson helped her pack up the items. She reported that the Historical Society will be hosting a display for approximately 6 to 8 weeks and will then temporarily store the items until a long-range storage option can be determined. It was noted that a tour of the Historical Society will be conducted during the Ikata student visit.

D. Quzhou Adult Delegation 2026 Update.

Staff Liaison Acker stated that communication needs to be drafted to Quzhou representatives, explaining that a 2025 delegation is not possible but expressing interest in a 2026 delegation. She stated that Mayor Iocco has expressed interest in participating in a delegation. Chair Knott offered to provide assistance with drafting the communication, with Commissioner Peng to assist with the translation. Staff Liaison Acker indicated that more committee members are needed to assist with planning activities.

E. Finance Report.

Staff Liaison Acker reviewed the Finance Report and highlighted budget adjustments. She discussed a JASM membership renewal and commented regarding the resources and benefits offered to members.

Staff Liaison Acker detailed budget placeholders for anticipated expenses, including gifts, the welcome dinner, the farewell picnic, the tree, and miscellaneous tickets and events. She provided a student fundraising update. She discussed the cost of airfare and other travel expenses.

A motion was made by Chair Knott, seconded by Commissioner Kreye and unanimously carried, to adopt the Finance Report as presented.

8. Communication Items

A. Commission Members Needed.

Chair Knott referenced the need for more members. It was noted that the terms of Commissioners Niebeling, Peng, and Kreye will expire at the end of the year. Potential membership recruitment opportunities and ideas were suggested.

9. Adjournment

Chair Knott adjourned the meeting at 5:57 p.m.

Red Wing Sister Cities Commission Financial Report - June 2025

	101 Account - General Fund		248 Account - Sister Cities		Combined	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Income						
From General Fund	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Student fundraising 2025 (bagging)			\$ 6,400.00	\$ 6,453.00	\$ 6,400.00	\$ 6,453.00
2025 Donations			\$ 6,200.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 6,200.00	\$ 3,500.00
From previous fundraising & City transfers			\$ 8,253.98	\$ 8,253.98 **		
Downpayments and add'l payments from families			\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Money returned to families (excess funds raised)			\$ -		\$ -	
Total Income	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 21,853.98	\$ 19,206.98	\$ 26,853.98	\$ 19,206.98
Expenses - General						
Young Artist Showcase Prize	\$ 600.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 600.00	\$ -
Young Artist Expenses	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 300.00	\$ -
River City Days Parade	\$ 200.00	\$ 75.00 entry fee	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ 75.00
Postage & Copying	\$ 100.00	\$ 22.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100.00	\$ 22.70
Misc. Expense	\$ 825.00	\$ 100.00 JASM dues	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 825.00	\$ 100.00
Total General Expense	\$ 2,025.00	\$ 197.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,025.00	\$ 197.70
Expenses - Ikata						
Airfare & travel agent fees			\$ 13,750.00	\$ 9,449.36 AIR	\$ 13,750.00	\$ 9,449.36
Tour			\$ 2,600.00	\$ 3,000.00 est	\$ 2,600.00	\$ 3,000.00
Chaperone Background Check	\$ 75.00				\$ 75.00	\$ -
Gifts sent with Chaperone	\$ 250.00				\$ 250.00	\$ -
Chaperone Subsidy			\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
Student Subsidy					\$ -	\$ -
Welcome Event & Farewell Picnic	\$ 750.00	\$ 429.52 welcome quote			\$ 750.00	\$ 429.52
Tree Planting	\$ 350.00				\$ 350.00	\$ -
T-shirts	\$ 100.00				\$ 100.00	\$ -
Miscellaneous (tickets, events, etc)	\$ 800.00	\$ 240.00 saints tickets			\$ 800.00	\$ 240.00
Total Ikata Expense	\$ 2,325.00	\$ 669.52	\$ 18,850.00	\$ 14,949.36	\$ 21,175.00	\$ 15,618.88
Expenses - Quzhou						
Miscellaneous	\$ 650.00				\$ 650.00	\$ -
Total Quzhou Expense	\$ 650.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 650.00	\$ -
Total All Expense	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 867.22			\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,124.84
Balance	\$ -	\$ 4,132.78		\$ 4,257.62		

4 students and 1 chaperone = 2025 Ikata Exchange

** This is a combination of funds donated, raised and transferred from the GF since 2021

* Student subsidy is a "scholarship" of up to \$500 per student if fundraising falls short

		Marek	Nisha	Audrey	Bella		Ashlyn-Chap	Total	
Family Fare 1/26-1/26	\$ 1,001.00	\$ 286.00	\$ 286.00	\$ 143.00	\$ 143.00		\$ 143.00	\$ 1,001.00	
Family Fare 2/22-2/23	\$ 758.00	\$ 238.00	\$ 252.00	\$ 134.00	\$ 134.00		\$ -	\$ 758.00	
Family Fare 3/8-3/9	\$ 700.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 133.00	\$ 133.00		\$ 134.00	\$ 700.00	
Red Wing Elks Donation 3/10	\$ 400.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00			\$ 400.00	
RW Rotary Donation 3/10	\$ 400.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00			\$ 400.00	
Red Men Club Donation 3/19	\$ 500.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00		\$ 100.00	\$ 500.00	
Family Fare - Easter	\$ 1,296.00	\$ 216.00	\$ 216.00	\$ 432.00	\$ 432.00			\$ 1,296.00	
American Legion 4/21	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00			\$ 2,000.00	
Noontime Kiwanis 4/29	\$ 200.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00			\$ 200.00	
Family Fare 5/10-5/11	\$ 1,218.00	\$ 203.00	\$ 406.00	\$ 406.00	\$ 203.00			\$ 1,218.00	
Family Fare 5/23-5/24	\$996.00	\$ 166.00	\$ 332.00	\$ 332.00	\$ 166.00			\$ 996.00	
Family Fare 6/14-6/15	\$484	\$ 242.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 242.00			\$ 484.00	
Sub-total Bagging & Donations	\$ 9,953.00	\$ 2,351.00	\$ 2,492.00	\$ 2,430.00	\$ 2,303.00	\$ -	\$ 377.00	\$ 9,953.00	
Family contribution		\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00		\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	
								\$ -	
								\$ -	
								\$ -	
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								\$ -	
								\$ -	
								\$ -	
								\$ -	
Sub-total Donations	\$ -	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	
Family downpayment							\$ -	\$ -	
Add'l payments from families								\$ -	
Sub-total	\$ 9,953.00	\$ 2,601.00	\$ 2,742.00	\$ 2,680.00	\$ 2,553.00	\$ -	\$ 377.00	\$ 10,953.00	
Plane tickets (insurance & fee)		\$ 1,863.31	\$ 1,863.31	\$ 1,863.31	\$ 1,863.31		\$ 1,996.12	\$ 9,449.36	insurance & flight
Tour Actual		\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00		\$ 600.00		Approx \$554
Total Actual Cost of Trip		\$ 2,463.31	\$ 2,463.31	\$ 2,463.31	\$ 2,463.31		\$ 2,596.12	\$ 9,449.36	
Chaperone Grant From Reserve Funds							\$ 2,500.00		
Due before departure (total cost less earnings)		\$ (137.69)	\$ (278.69)	\$ (216.69)	\$ (89.69)		\$ (280.88)		
Paid before departure									
Total refunded							\$ -	\$ -	
Additional Cost to the SSC Fund (due to change in the value of the yen)									



June 3, 2025

Mr. Li Peng
Director Foreign Affairs Office of Quzhou Municipal People's Government
No. 37, Baiyun Avenue (M)
Kecheng District, Quzhou, Zhejiang
People's Republic of China

RE: 2025 City of Red Wing Delegation Visit

Dear Mr. Peng:

The City of Red Wing and the Red Wing Sister Cities Commission would like to Thank you for your generous invitation to send a delegation from Red Wing to visit Quzhou this fall. The 30th Anniversary Celebration of our Sister Cities relationship in 2024 was a wonderful reminder of all the exchanges between our two cities. The invitation to visit China was received with a great deal of excitement and interest on the part of our Sister Cities Commission, and by our newly elected Mayor, Gary Iocco, and our newly hired City Administrator, Chris Heineman. Both have a strong desire to visit Quzhou and are looking forward to doing so. In fact, Chris' wife Joanie Heinemann was once an exchange teacher in China, something which she remembers fondly.

Unfortunately, timeline constraints make coordinating a delegation visit in 2025 difficult. We would welcome an invitation to send a Mayoral/City Government delegation in the fall of 2026. We are strongly committed to fostering our relationship with our Sister City and look forward to doing so.

Sincerely,

Gary James Iocco
Mayor of Red Wing

Austin Knott
Chairperson, RW Sister Cities Commission

衢州市人民政府外事办公室

Foreign Affairs Office of Quzhou Municipal People's Government

Jun. 18th, 2025

To: Mr. Austin Knott

Chairperson of Sister Cities Commission of Red Wing, Minnesota, USA

Dear Mr. Austin Knott,

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere greetings to you and all the members of the Red Wing Sister Cities Commission!

Since Quzhou and Red Wing became Sister Cities in 1994, thirty-one years have passed hand in hand in a flash. Our two cities have carried out extensive and in-depth exchanges and cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, culture, education, and public health, achieving fruitful results under the joint efforts of both municipal governments and the Red Wing Sister Cities Commission. We cherish the friendship with Red Wing and look forward to further expanding and deepening the friendly cooperative relationship between our two cities, working together to create an even brighter future.

Today, I am particularly honored and delighted to inform you that Co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the People's Government of Zhejiang Province, and organized by Hangzhou Municipal People's Government, the 7th China-U.S. Sister Cities Conference will take place in Hangzhou from Oct. 25 to 27, 2025. Sister cities are an important vehicle for enhancing mutual understanding and friendly ties among people and promoting friendly exchanges and practical cooperation between China and U.S.. To date, CPAFFC and Sister Cities International have successfully co-hosted six sessions of the China-U.S. Sister Cities Conference, inviting local governments leaders and guests across all sectors of the two nations to engage deeply on issues of common concern. These conferences have provided a vital platform for Chinese and American provinces, states and cities to share experiences, enhance friendship, and pursue concrete cooperation.

With the theme of "Closer Partnership for a Sustainable Future", the 7th China-U.S. Sister Cities Conference will focus on topics such as educational exchanges, innovation and sustainable practices in city development, etc.. The Schedule (TBC) of the Seventh China-U.S. Sister Cities Conference is as follows:

Oct. 24 (Fri.) Arrivals in Hangzhou

Oct. 25 (Sat.) Site Visits:

Route 1 (Group A)

Morning Westlake University

Afternoon Liangzhu Museum; Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City Park; China Artificial Intelligence Town

Route 2 (Group B)

Morning China Artificial Intelligence Town

Afternoon Liangzhu Museum; Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City Park; Westlake University

Oct. 26 (Sun.): Site Visits

Morning Zhijiang Campus, Zhejiang University; Jiangyangfan Ecological Park

Afternoon Boat Tour (West Lake)

Evening Welcome Dinner BSO (Baltimore Symphony Orchestra) Show

Oct. 27 (Mon.)

Morning Opening Ceremony

Session 1: Educational Exchanges

Session 2: Innovation and City Development

Afternoon Session 3: Sustainable Practice in Cities' Development
Session 4: Closer Partnership between China-US Sister Cities - Experience Sharing
One-on-one Communication between Sino-US sister cities
Evening Lake show: "The Enduring Memories of Hangzhou"

Oct. 28 (Tue.) Departures

Located at the eastern part of China, which is only one hour's driving from Shanghai, Hangzhou boasts its long history, beautiful landscape, economic vitality and innovation atmosphere, making it a perfect blend of ancient Chinese charm and cutting-edge innovation, as well as a model of Chinese cities opening to the outside world. This event promises to be a landmark occasion for sister city cooperation between the two nations. We sincerely invite you to attend the conference this year, with all your expenses of transportation, accommodation, and meals within China covered. Here, we sincerely invite you and representatives of the Sister Cities Commission to attend the Seventh China-U.S. Sister Cities Conference and visit Quzhou as well. We look forward to your reply.

Thanks again to the Sister Cities Commission for its great contribution to the friendship between our two cities. Finally, I sincerely wish you good health and great success in your work! May the friendship between our two cities last forever!

Sincerely,

Director Peng Li

ForeignAffairsOfficeofQuzhouMunicipalPeople'sGovernment,Zhejiang Province, China

地址：浙江省衢州市柯城区白云中大道37号 传真(0570)3073645
Add: No.37, Baiyun Avenue(M), Kecheng District, Quzhou, Zhejiang Fax:(0570) 3073645

