

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

July 23, 2025

Members Present: Chair Austin Knott; Commissioners Shawn Niebeling, Ingrid Hokanson, Renee Kreye, Sheena Whitlock, Tao Peng, Kim Clancy, Tammy Jaynes, Danielle DeWitt, and Maura Curry (left at 5:30 p.m.)

Members Absent: Commissioner Ashlyn Werner

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

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

Chair Knott welcomed Commissioner DeWitt. She introduced herself and described her background. Chair Knott reported that Ashlyn Werner has also joined the Sister Cities Commission but was unable to attend the meeting, as she is serving as the 2025 Ikata student exchange chaperone. He stated that there are still two Sister Cities Commission vacancies.

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. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes from May 28, 2025.

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

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Motions & General Business

A. Finance Report.

Staff Liaison Acker reviewed an updated Finance Report. She detailed recent expenses related to the Ikata student exchange and highlighted funds that will be available for other Sister Cities Commission activities. She reviewed a student fundraising report, noting that all of the students raised more than the cost of the trip. She stated that students will receive a refund of up to \$250. She noted that the Sister Cities Commission budget has a current balance of \$3,786.58.

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

B. Ikata Student Exchange Committee Report and Update.

1. Update on Plans and Final Activity Schedule for the Student Exchange in Red Wing.

Commissioner Jaynes reviewed final plans for the River City Days parade, the welcome dinner at Colvill Courtyard, the farewell picnic, and the St. Paul Saints game.

2. Discuss and Vote on Any Additional Expenditures for Ikata Student Visit to Red Wing.

A trip to the Mall of America was discussed, and it was noted that three additional ride tickets would cost approximately \$35 each. Following discussion an amended motion was made by Commissioner Kreye, seconded by Commissioner Curry, to spend up to \$125 for additional Mall of America ride tickets. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner DeWitt discussed a potential pottery-making activity at Red Wing High School. She noted that the cost of this activity would not exceed \$200. A motion was made by Chair Knott, seconded by Commissioner Peng, to approve an expenditure of up to \$200 to cover the cost of supplies for a student pottery-making experience at Red Wing High School. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Jaynes reviewed the rest of the schedule. She discussed activities involving the Ikata chaperones.

Staff Liaison Acker asked about the start time of a visit to the Goodhue County Historical Society on August 5, where gifts from Ikata and Quzhou will be on display. Commissioner Kreye indicated that she will verify the visit time. Staff Liaison Acker also asked Commissioners to review the Quzhou display panel information in terms of accuracy.

Council Liaison Lambert requested clarification of the potluck dinner and the catered dinner. It was noted that the welcome dinner will be catered and the farewell dinner will be a potluck. Commissioner Whitlock reviewed plans for a BBQ dinner. The dates of the dinners were clarified. Parade plans were also clarified.

It was suggested to obtain an accurate head count for the welcome dinner. Staff Liaison Acker indicated that she will extend invitations to the Mayor, the City Council, and the Council Administrator. Sister Cities Commission members were asked to RSVP for the welcome dinner. Other welcome dinner invitees were suggested.

C. Ikata / Quzhou Friendship Delegation Update.

Staff Liaison Acker provided background information and referenced past discussion of a Quzhou friendship delegation invitation. She stated that City leaders were recently invited to attend a US-China conference in China in October of 2025. She stated that City staff members are working on a response to both invitations.

Staff Liaison Acker suggested discussion of the scope of a future delegation and the formation of a committee to work on planning activities. Commissioner Peng offered to serve on the committee, even after his term on the Sister Cities Commission ends on December 31, 2025. Commissioner Peng discussed his attendance at a past conference in Shanghai, China. He suggested focusing on a city-to-city friendship delegation in 2026.

D. Young Artists and Authors Showcase Committee.

Chair Knott stated that a new chair and committee members are needed for this committee. Staff Liaison Acker discussed the competition and the work of the committee. She noted that assistance has been provided by Red Wing High School teacher Kristin Bray in the past. She stated that the 2026 theme has not yet been announced. Commissioner Kreye volunteered to serve as the committee chair, noting that her term on the Sister Cities Commission will not expire until the end of 2026. Commissioners DeWitt and Whitlock stated that they will consider serving on the committee. Commissioner Niebeling commented that Dawn Erickson has offered to facilitate a workshop for students interested in participating in the artist showcase.

E. Community Visibility.

Staff Liaison Acker discussed opportunities for social media postings during the Ikata exchange. She asked Sister Cities Commission members to take photos and share them with her. She stated that Commissioner Whitlock has been sharing information on Instagram. It was stated that photos can also be used during recruitment activities for next year's Ikata student exchange.

8. Communication Items

A. November Meeting Date or Time Change Needed.

Chair Knott reviewed options for scheduling a November Sister Cities Commission meeting. It was decided to schedule a special meeting on Thursday, November 20.

9. Adjournment

Chair Knott adjourned the meeting at 6:03 p.m.