

**Red Wing Sister Cities Commission  
Special Meeting  
City Council Chambers  
November 17, 2025**

**Members Present:** Commissioners Tao Peng, Ingrid Hokanson, Kimberly Clancy, Renee Kreye, Ashlyn Werner, Danielle DeWitt, and Sheena Whitlock, and Student Advisory Member Nisha Catarino Santiago

**Members Absent:** Chair Austin Knott and Commissioners Shawn Niebling, Tammy Jaynes, Council Liaison Vicky Lambert (excused absences)

**Others Present:** Lisa Acker, Staff Liaison

Staff Liaison Acker stated that with the Chair and Vice Chair absent from the meeting, a Chair would need to be nominated as Pro Tem for the meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hokanson, seconded by Commissioner Kreye to approve the nomination of Commissioner Peng as the Chair Pro Tem for the meeting. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7:0.

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Pro Tem Peng called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Pro Tem Peng led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Roll Call**

Roll call was conducted. Chair Pro Tem Peng and Commissioners Hokanson, Clancy, Kreye, Werner, DeWitt, Whitlock, and Student Advisory Member Catarino Santiago were in attendance.

Chair Knott and Commissioners Niebling and Jaynes previously indicated they would be absent.

**4. Approval of Agenda**

A motion was made by Commissioner Kreye, seconded by Commissioner DeWitt to approve the agenda as drafted. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7:0.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

**A. Approve the Minutes from the October 22, 2025, Meeting.**

A motion was made by Commissioner Kreye, seconded by Commissioner Whitlock to approve the minutes as drafted. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7:0.

## 6. Public Comment

No one wished to address the Commission.

## 7. Motions & General Business

### A. Discuss and Approve the Interview Committee's Recommendation for the 2026 Ikata Student Exchange Chaperone.

Commissioner Werner explained that there were three individuals who were interviewed, the group decided which person to recommend, and that person has accepted. She noted that there is a backup as well. Commissioner DeWitt added that the deadline was extended because originally, the applicant who was selected declined.

Commissioner Kreye asked if more information could be given about the recommended person. Commissioner Werner shared that the person has experience with children, has a student interested in going on the trip, works in healthcare, and has a lot of interest in Japanese culture. Commissioner DeWitt added that the recommended person was a chaperone on a band trip and has also been international. Staff Liaison Acker asked whether, if their child is not accepted into the program, the recommended person would also be unable to go on the trip. The Commission discussed that the applicant had been well informed of the expectation and was still interested if their child was not selected.

Commissioner Kreye asked if a parent had ever gone as a chaperone. Staff Liaison Acker stated that, not in her own tenure, but the applicant had reached out to her, and it was made very clear before even applying that the applicant would not be there as a parent. The Commissioners who did the interview process noted making it very clear what was expected and what the outcomes could be.

Commissioner Kreye asked if the recommended person would be in the student interview process as well. It was stated that she would be. Commissioner DeWitt asked if there is an official rule that states parents cannot be the chaperone for their own children's trip. Staff Liaison Acker clarified that there is no official rule, but this would be the precedent going forward. She added that the student interviews would have to be more careful in how they are conducted. She noted that the chaperone does not have a vote, but their input is valued.

A motion was made by Commissioner DeWitt, seconded by Commissioner Werner to approve the committee's recommendation for the chaperone. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7:0.

## 8. Communication Items

1. Staff Liaison Acker explained that the 2026 Young Artist and Author, YAAS, Showcase theme was released, and that Commissioner Kreye would be reaching out to coordinate a meeting before the December Sister Cities Commission, SCC, Meeting. The deadline for YAAS is April 1, so the City's

deadline should be March 1, to announce the winners at the March SCC meeting.

2. Staff Liaison Acker shared that an invitation has come for a Mayoral delegation to visit Quzhou in 2026. She added that the Mayor and City Administrator are in support, and the next step would be for Chair Pro Tem Peng and her to sit down with them and determine the next steps. Commissioner Clancy noted that she would like to be included when Staff Liaison Acker and Chair Pro Tem Peng meet with the Mayor and City Administrator. Staff Liaison Acker commented that there will be an opportunity for other Commissioners to get involved as well, but the Commission cannot fundraise for it due to being part of the City.
3. Staff Liaison Acker shared that the Goodhue County Historical Society has asked to keep the SCC gifts and then loan them out as needed if the Commission and the City Council agree to do so. She added that the gifts just sit in boxes, because there is no space to display publicly on a long-term basis. Chair Pro Tem Peng asked about new gifts that come in. Staff Liaison Acker indicated that it would have to be asked of the Historical Society how it would be done piece by piece, or if the same process of accumulating would happen again. Chair Pro Tem Peng shared that it is a good idea, because the gifts are not just for the Commission, but for everybody, and the Historical Society has a way to care for them.

A motion was made by Commissioner DeWitt, seconded by Commissioner Clancy to recommend the transfer of the gifts to the Goodhue County Historical Society. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7:0.

4. Staff Liaison Acker reported that the 2026 Ikata Exchange program parent/student informational meeting is being held on December 1. There has been one student application, Commissioner DeWitt has done a student presentation, and the video is complete and has been shared. Commissioner DeWitt stated that with the video, the teachers have a blurb to read, and the applications are in the main office. The Commission noted that there is a high interest level, with about 22 student applications being handed out. Commissioner DeWitt asked if those who apply are required to host. Staff Liaison Acker stated that it is not a requirement, but better if they can and there is information about that. The Commission discussed the host situations.

## 9. Adjournment

Chair Pro Tem Peng adjourned the meeting at 5:48 p.m.