

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

Members Present: Chair Austin Knott, Commissioners Tammy Jaynes (online), Tao Peng, Shawn Niebeling, Ingrid Hokanson, Kimberly Clancy, Renee Kreye, Ashlyn Werner, Danielle DeWitt, Sheena Whitlock, and Student Advisory Member Nisha Catarino Santiago

Members Absent: All members were in attendance

Others Present: Lisa Acker, Staff Liaison

1. Call to Order

Chair Austin Knott called the meeting to order at 5:16 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Knott led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

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

4. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Commissioner Tao, seconded by Commissioner Kreye to approve the agenda as drafted. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10:0.

5. Approval of Minutes

A. Approve the Minutes from the November 17, 2025, Meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tao, seconded by Commissioner Kreye to approve the minutes as drafted. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10:0.

6. Public Comment

No one wished to address the Commission.

7. Motions & General Business

A. Finance Report.

Staff Liaison Acker gave an overview of the budget as found in the Agenda Packet and stated that the excess money will go back to the general fund.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kreye, seconded by Commissioner Tao to reimburse Commissioner DeWitt \$129.01 for the two meals. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10:0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tao, seconded by Commissioner DeWitt to adopt the Finance Report as presented. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10:0.

B. Discuss and Approve 2026 Sister Cities Commission Meeting Dates.

Staff Liaison Acker presented the proposed dates for the 2026 meeting schedule as found in the Agenda Packet.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kreye, seconded by Commissioner Tao to approve the 2026 Regular Meeting and Workshop Schedule as presented. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10:0.

8. Committee Reports

A. Ikata Student Exchange Committee Report.

Commissioner DeWitt explained that there were 12 total applicants, with 11 showing up for interviews, and the age range was from 8th grade through 11th grade. She shared that recruiting was conducted in classrooms, a video was shared with all the high school students, and a parent informational meeting was held. She stated that interviews took place on December 10 and 12, lasting from 5:00 to 8:30 p.m., with the first 15 minutes with students and then 15 minutes with parents and students together. She noted that all the applicants were extremely great options and made it hard to vote. She explained how the six applicants and two alternates were chosen by the selection process, with a numerical value and a discussion.

Commissioner Werner briefed the Commission on the six students who had been selected for approval by the Commission and the two alternates. She shared that the selection committee is proposing three boys and three girls, two 11th graders, one 9th grader, and three 8th graders. She noted that no family has hosting concerns.

Commissioner Kreye commended the committee for its hard work in the process.

Staff Liaison Acker noted that she was going to be putting together three different letters to show that the student has been accepted and needs to confirm, the student has been chosen as an alternate and needs to confirm, and the third stating the student was not selected but encouraged to reapply next year. She added that those letters will go out soon.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tao, seconded by Commissioner Kreye to accept the slate of students recommended by the Ikata Committee for the Ikata

Exchange 2026. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10:0.

Staff Liaison Acker thanked those on the Committee for their commitment. Chair Knott thanked Staff Liaison Acker, Commissioner DeWitt, and the rest of the committee members.

B. YAAS Committee Update.

Commissioner Renee shared that the committee is starting to be organized, and there are students who are already interested. She noted the flyer that was made by Commissioner Whitlock and included in the Agenda Packet, which will be hung up around town. Staff Liaison Acker added that the flyer would be posted to social media and the website as well.

9. Communication Items

A.

Staff Liaison Acker gave an update on the City Council meeting from November 24, 2025, and the potential transfer of gifts received to the Goodhue County Historical Society. She added that there is a Deed of Form that will have to go before the City Council, which will work out all of the logistics, such as different displays at different times and access to the items. She noted that City Administrator Heineman is going to display some items permanently in a case in his office that represents the City, not just the Sister Cities.

Chair Knott asked if the transfer means that the items are on loan to the Goodhue County Historical Society or if the items belong to them. Staff Liaison Acker clarified that the items will belong to the Goodhue County Historical Society, but there are different levels at which it can be done, and the City would still have access to the items via a “loan”.

Staff Liaison Acker shared about the delegation to Quzhou in September 2026, which Commissioners Tao and Clancy have shown interest in, and finding a time in the new year to meet to discuss the delegation.

Staff Liaison Acker shared an email the Mayor received expressing Holiday Greetings from Quzhou. She noted she will get cards sent to China and Japan.

B.

Chair Knott thanked Commissioners Tao and Niebeling for their years of service on the Commission. Staff Liaison Acker explained the Commissioners can come back after a year off and be a part of the Commission again if desired. She thanked them both for their different areas of interest and noted that new members will be needed so please “spread the word”.

10. Adjournment

Chair Knott adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.