

**Red Wing Sister Cities Commission
Workshop
Community Development Building
February 25, 2026**

Members Present: Chair Austin Knott, Commissioners Tammy Jaynes, Ingrid Hokanson, Kimberly Clancy, Renee Kreye, Ashlyn Werner, Danielle DeWitt, Sheena Whitlock, Kendal Swanson, Tricia Perau, and Alexandra Klitzke (arrived at 5:25 p.m.)

Members Absent: Student Advisory member Nisha Catarino Santiago (excused absence)

Others Present: Lisa Acker, Staff Liaison

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted. Chair Knott and Commissioners Jaynes, Hokanson, Clancy, Kreye, Werner, DeWitt, Whitlock, Swanson, Perau, and Klitzke were in attendance.

Student Advisory Member Nisha Catarino Santiago previously indicated she would be absent.

1. Public Comment

Chair Knott reviewed the public comment procedure.

No one wished to address the Commission.

2. Workshop Items

A. Updated Meeting Schedule.

Chair Knott shared that Staff Liaison Acker would be out of town for the September meeting, and the date would need to be moved to September 30, 2026. Staff Liaison Acker noted that no formal adoption could be done in the workshop but wanted to check in to see if there were any conflicts at this time. The adoption of the new meeting schedule would take place at the March meeting.

Commissioner Klitzke arrived at 5:25 p.m.

B. Welcome to New Commissioner, Kendal Swanson.

Chair Knott welcomed Kendal Swanson to the Sister Cities Commission. Staff Liaison Acker noted that the process has changed, and new board members may be sworn in at either the Council or the Commission meetings. Commissioner Swanson was sworn in at the last Council meeting.

C. Statutory Requirements for Commissioner Members Participating in a Meeting via Interactive Technology.

Staff Liaison Acker explained that Council Liaison Lambert raised the possibility of changes to the board and commission policy at the last meeting; those changes will be formally presented at the next meeting. She shared that to be truly present at an official meeting, a person must be on camera; if that standard cannot be met, that person cannot vote or be part of a quorum. The Commission discussed various questions about what would be considered present at the meeting and which meetings would matter.

D. Ikata Student Exchange Program.

Staff Liaison Acker stated that Commissioner DeWitt redid the forms because the old ones were outdated. She included the forms for the Commission to review and, if needed, change for the upcoming year. The Commission discussed that having an overall goal for the whole program would help in the selection process for students and in informing those who ask. They also shared that having a willing chaperone for multiple years in a row would be beneficial; there were questions about what that would look like. Staff Liaison Acker shared that the interview committee could iron out the details about chaperones. Chair Knott pointed out that the committee can draft a policy for the chaperones, but the draft should then return to a workshop so all the Commissioners can have input and buy in on the policy.

The process used for interviewing and scoring the students was effective and should be documented so the Commission can approve it, which will be done by the interview committee. The Commission discussed the questions asked of the students and what the questions should look like. Commissioner DeWitt shared that the intent of the application and interview questions being similar was to allow the student to elaborate on their answers. Many of the questions on the application helped the committee see all aspects of the students' lives. The Commission decided to put a numerical system on the interview questions to help determine a student's score at the end of the interview.

Commissioner Jaynes had to leave the meeting early but provided input on the program's mission statement.

Chair Knott asked if any priority should be given to the older students. The Commission discussed that the Japanese students are younger, and the best person for the spot needs to be picked, not just the oldest.

Staff Liaison Acker noted the Commission had a good discussion of all the information, and the committee can get together to narrow it down. The Commission all agreed that the students' application looked good. Commissioner Werner shared that the interview questions would be shortened. The flyer in the Agenda Packet was well received by all. The chaperone application is great. The one-page information sheet for students and chaperones needs to be shortened and updated. Commissioner Werner agreed to update all the flyers.

The Commission decided to review the chaperone expectations and job description to make sure the information accurately reflects what takes place. Staff Liaison Acker stated the updates do not have to be completed quickly, but they cannot be done in August when the information needs to go out. She shared that Commissioners Werner and Hokanson, who have served as chaperones, could add the necessary information. The Commission noted pushing some timelines forward this year, so that not everything comes at holiday time, and giving out information during the parade.

E. Quzhou/Friendship Delegation Update.

Commissioner Clancy shared an update about the meeting that took place, which discussed the timing, who might be willing to go, and what would be represented. A time has not been finalized, but mid-October has been discussed. Staff Liaison Acker shared that the Mayor had discussed ideas with her, but Tao Peng, former Commission member, noted that the delegation could be multifaceted. Currently, she is waiting on the Mayor and then will go to the City Council meeting to give a presentation. She shared that whoever goes with the delegation would have to pay their own way, as the Commission cannot fundraise because it is not a 501(c)(3).

The Commission discussed fundraising for the Ikata Student Exchange Program. Staff Liaison Acker shared that there are options if funds are short. Commissioner DeWitt asked whether more grocery bagging dates could be added and whether donations could be written outside the typical letters. Staff Liaison Acker shared that both were good to be done.

Chair Knott shared that he is very interested in going on the trip. Staff Liaison Acker pointed out that once it is decided who will lead the trip, the numbers can be determined.

F. Review Committee Assignments.

Staff Liaison Acker shared that Commissioner Swanson could take some time to decide which committee she would like to be on. Commissioner Swanson asked about which committee was available. Staff Liaison Acker noted that there would be Commissioners willing to change committees. Commissioner Swanson stated that she feels that Subcommittee Two would be a better fit than Subcommittee One but is interested in hearing more about the committee. Chair Knott shared that Subcommittee One is focused on getting the students and chaperones ready before they go. Subcommittee two was more focused on the students coming back, along with the Japanese students in Red Wing, and what the students would do. Commissioner Clancy removed herself from subcommittee two, and Commissioner Swanson was put on.

3. Adjournment

Chair Knott adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.