

**Red Wing Sister Cities Commission
Workshop
Ignite Conference Room, Community Development Building
419 Bush Street, Red Wing, MN
April 22, 2026**

Members Present: Chair Austin Knott (arrived at 5:25 p.m.), Commissioners Tammy Jaynes, Kimberly Clancy, Danielle DeWitt, Alexandra Klitzke, Kendal Swanson, and Sheena Whitlock

Members Absent: Commissioners Ingrid Hokanson, Renee Kreye, Ashlyn Werner, and Tricia Perau (excused absence); Student Advisory Member Nisha Catarino Santiago (unexcused absence)

Others Present: Lisa Acker, Staff Liaison

1. Roll Call

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

Commissioners Hokanson, Kreye, Werner, and Perau previously indicated they would be absent.

Student Advisory Member Nisha Catarino Santiago was absent and unexcused.

2. Public Comment

No one wished to address the Commission.

3. Workshop Items

A. Quzhou Friendship Delegation Visit – October 2026.

Staff Liaison Acker explained that she had emailed the City Administrator and the Mayor regarding plans for the visit, but had not heard back. The Commission discussed who was interested in going.

B. Finance Report.

Staff Liaison Acker stated that since the Agenda Packet was submitted, two donations had been received for inclusion in the financial report. She reviewed the recent expenses and donations. The Commission discussed how close the Ikata Exchange Students were to meeting the trip's financial goals.

Chair Knott arrived at 5:25 p.m.

C.

1. Ikata Student Exchange Program

Commissioner DeWitt shared information on donations received and where the students were in relation to their financial goals. She noted the possibility

of adding a few extra grocery-bagging days. T-shirts have been ordered for the students. She shared that the Commission could also order T-shirts if they wanted. Student biographies are being completed, and the Commission is encouraged to look at them to get to know the students.

Staff Liaison Acker checked whether all the Commissioners knew which subcommittees they were on. She encouraged them not to wait to get things done.

The Commission discussed the event happening on Saturday and what transportation would look like.

Staff Liaison Acker asked where the chaperones would stay. Commissioner DeWitt stated that last year the chaperone stayed at a Bed and Breakfast, but had not heard where this year. Staff Liaison Acker talked about the chaperone coming to Red Wing and asked to confirm how many were visiting, but two rooms were reserved. She asked that the dates be confirmed.

2. Go Over Possible Mission Statements

Commissioner Jaynes pointed out the possible Mission Statements as found in the Agenda Packet. The Commission discussed that the blend of the two options was great and that Commissioner Perau had done a great job. Staff Liaison Acker stated that the goal of the Mission Statement was to give the Exchange Program a purpose. She noted that the blend of the two Mission Statements would be added to the May agenda for adoption.

3. Review and Discuss Updated Forms and Processes Related to Exchange

Commissioner Jaynes pointed out that the forms were included in the Agenda Packet. Commissioner DeWitt asked the Commission to specifically review pages 12-14 in the Agenda Packet regarding the Student Qualifications – Japan Exchange Program. The Commission discussed the Student Qualifications and updated the document accordingly. They also discussed the idea of creating a separate sleeping area for the Japanese students, removing it from the document, and then discussing it with the families during the interviews. The Commission discussed the chaperone policy and what that would sound like in writing: “Prior chaperones may have the opportunity to serve in this role for up to three years. This opportunity would be granted at the discretion of the Commission. This opportunity can be accepted or denied by the chaperone, as all experiences and scheduling concerns may change. A commission member can be considered for this opportunity.”

Staff Liaison Acker noted that it was good to have in writing that the chaperone could not have a child going on the trip as well. She pointed out that there may need to be something added about not taking a spouse along

on the trip. The Commission added: “Individuals who are not selected by the Commission cannot participate in the exchange program.”

Staff Liaison Acker shared that the document is a living document and can be added to as things go along. Commissioner DeWitt pointed out that it is a good document to share with new people to the process, so they know what is going on. Staff Liaison Acker stated that the documents do not require Commission approval.

D. Ideas for Expanding Sister Cities Activities into the Community.

Commissioner Jaynes stated that the Commission was seeking ideas to expand awareness of the Sister Cities Commission. Commissioner Clancy suggested having a booth at the Farmer’s Market.

Staff Liaison Acker stated that the goal of including this as an agenda item is to form a committee that would generate ideas and then be in charge of them, not ideas she would have to implement. She pointed out that there are committees that do not meet year-round and that could form a new one. For the Sister Cities Commission (SCC) to stay relevant, the SCC must be out in the public so people know what it is.

Commissioner Swanson suggested participating in the Free Saturday that the Historical Center does once a month. Staff Liaison Acker stated that finding something that would also incorporate the adults would be good. Commissioner DeWitt asked whether the events need to be culturally relevant or if it is just about getting the Commission’s name out there. Staff Liaison Acker stated that it could be a combination of both things. She added that there is a budget for things, but questions must be answered and considered before events take place. Chair Knott noted that the idea is to share what the SCC is, but could be centered around culture. Commissioner DeWitt shared that the SCC should host a puzzle competition with a Chinese- or Japanese-themed puzzle.

Staff Liaison Acker asked whether anyone would like to serve on the events subcommittee. Commissioner Whitlock volunteered. She shared that if ideas come up, Commissioners could write them out, think them through, and then share.

E. Communication Items.

Commissioner Jaynes shared that, starting June 1, student liaisons to the SCC will become voting members and will be included in the quorum. Staff Liaison Acker shared that, under the new policy, the committees could be six.

Staff Liaison Acker explained that student participation will need to improve for this to happen. She noted that when the email is sent to potential new student members, she will emphasize that attendance is very important.

4. Adjournment

Commissioner Jaynes adjourned the meeting at 6:28 p.m.