

Abilene-Omitama Sister City Board  
October 9, 2024  
6:00 p.m.  
Jordan Room, Abilene Public Library

Agenda for Board Meeting:

- I. Call to order.
- II. Changes to agenda/Approval of agenda
- III. Approval of minutes of August 2024 meeting
- IV. Public comments, correspondence
  - A. News from Omitama
  - B. Public presentations
    1. Proclamation
    2. Presentation of Sister City gift to City of Abilene
  - C. Official correspondence
    1. Letter to Mayor Shimada
- V. Financial report
  - A. Income/expense report for August 2024
- VI. Friends of Sister City – Heather Unruh
- VII. Japan Club – Jerry Rankin
- VIII. Ideas for possible events for 2025
- IX. Recruitment for 2025
  1. Contact schools
- X. Sister City sign
- XI. Sister City International
  1. Opportunity for students in art program
  2. Opportunity for student to work in World Expo in Japan
- XII. Adjourn - Next meeting is TBD 6:00 p.m. at the Abilene Public Library.

## ABILENE-OMITAMA SISTER CITY BOARD MINUTES

August 20, 2024

**Call to Order:** The Abilene-Omitama Sister City Board Meeting was called to order by Claire Anderson at 6:04 PM at the Abilene Public Library. The following board members were also in attendance: Corina Ryland (via phone), Kim Shafer, Andrea Taylor, Kevin Unruh, and Cindy Whittington. Also present were Leann Johnson (Abilene City Representative), Donna Reynolds, and Heather Unruh (Friends of Sister City). Eric Anderson, Audrey Corbett, and Bill Marshall were absent.

**Changes/Approval of Agenda:** Andrea moved and Cindy seconded to approve the agenda with changes. (Changes - Rearranged order of discussion allowing Donna Reynolds to speak first due to a prior commitment.) All in favor.

**Approval of Minutes** from July 9, 2024 meeting: Andrea moved and Kevin seconded to approve the minutes. All in favor.

### **Public Comments/Correspondence:**

Donna's Comments – Overall good scheduling regarding the delegation's visit. Donna said the "replacement" suitcase should be taken to Chiho next summer and Chiho's current suitcase should become the "traveling" suitcase. Donna reported hearing many positive responses from this summer's host families. She said van driver Jason Kohler expressed interest in going to Japan next summer.

During the visit, Jennifer Hager and Jerry Rankin expressed interest in being on the Sister City Board. They will be encouraged to fill out applications available at the City Office.

News from Omitama – Some board members had received messages from Chiho. These included some specific ideas and comments for Claire, for the mayors of both cities, and for Azuki.

Thank You Cards – A thank you note was presented to Leann for her work with the Sister City Board.

Members discussed the list of those needing thank you cards and possible donation amounts. Bob Bow donated 30 thank you cards for the board's use. Corina made a motion to approve the following lists of recipients and donation amounts. Andrea seconded. All in favor.

#### Thank you card only

Bob Bow for water bottles

Episcopal Church for use of the basement

Parks and Rec for use of the facility

Bryce and Stan Norman for presentation

Fire Department

Mayor Brandon Rein

City Manager Ron Marsh

Abilene Public Library

Darren Schwartz (sp)

Russell Stover for candy boxes

#### Thank you card and donation

First Christian Church for vans/drivers – \$500 and/or mileage

Abilene Schools for school bus/driver – mileage

Heritage Center for presentation, etc. – \$250

DK County Arts Council for art project – \$100

Milford Nature Center for presentation – \$100

Truckhenge for visit – \$30

Old Abilene Town for presentation – \$30

Kim will send a separate thank you card and donation to the Eisenhower Foundation from the Friends of Sister City.

Photos to Reflector-Chronicle – Claire will meet with Ron Marsh to officially present the gift from Omitama to the City of Abilene. This would be a good time to have additional photos from the delegation's visit submitted for publication.

**Financial Report:** Kevin reported the July 1 amount. Most bills were still outstanding. Leann said the current funds should cover most of the incurred expenses. Andrea moved and Cindy seconded to accept the financial report. All in favor.

Those present turned in expenses and receipts. Corina moved to approve the expenses incurred in preparation of, and during the delegation's visit. Andrea seconded. All in favor.

**Friends of Sister City:** Friends of Sister City will pay for any expenses not covered by the Sister City Budget. Donna Reynolds may be interested in becoming a Friends of Sister City member. Mary Montgomery has also expressed possible interest.

**Wrap-up of 2024 Summer Delegation:**

Most Host Family Questionnaires had not yet been returned.

Delegation Evaluations were discussed. The Parade/Rodeo Day and Host Family Days received the highest scores.

Improvements for 2026 included ordering less food for the Welcome Dinner. There was a lot of Country Mart chicken leftover. It was suggested to only order 2 pieces of chicken per person. Other improvements discussed; Buying fewer hotdogs for the Switch Cookout – 50 hamburgers were the right amount, 50 hotdogs would probably be about right (80 were too many). Heather suggested cooking 3 turkeys next time for the Farewell Dinner. Having more shopping opportunities for the delegates was also recommended.

**Review of Adult Sister City Meeting:**

Information from the adult meeting was shared with the group. The yen is currently weak.

**Recruitment for the 2025 Exchange:**

Many host families expressed interest in traveling to Japan in 2025. Putting the application online was discussed.

The library staff contacted Kim before the meeting. They have us on the calendar for the second Wednesday of the month at 6:00 PM in the Jordan Room. After discussion, Kim moved we follow the library's calendar. Cindy seconded. All in favor.

**The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 11, 2024** at 6:00 PM at the Abilene Public Library, Jordan Room. Andrea made a motion to adjourn, and Kevin seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Kim Shafer