



**ABILENE OMITAMA SISTER CITY BOARD
JORDAN ROOM, ABILENE PUBLIC LIBRARY, 209 NW FOURTH STREET
APRIL 14, 2026 - 6:00 PM**

Agenda for Board Meeting:

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Changes to Agenda/Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Sister City Board Meeting Minutes - March 10, 2026
- 4. Public Comments, Correspondence**
 - a. News from Omitama
 - b. Official Correspondence
- 5. Financial Report - Kim Shafer**
- 6. Friends of Siter City - Heather Unruh**
- 7. School Programs - Jerry Rankin and Corina Ryland**
- 8. Old Business**
 - a. March 22nd Trip to Japan — Feedback from those that attended
 - b. Draft Proposed Bylaws
 - c. Draft Proposed Code
 - d. Delegation Planning
- 9. Adjournment**

**CITY OF ABILENE
SISTER CITY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

March 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Abilene City Hall

419 N Broadway St. Abilene, KS 67410

Members Present: Jennie Hiatt (Chair), Jerry Rankin (Vice-Chair), Kim Shafer (Treasurer), Corina Ryland (Corresponding Secretary), Mary Montgomery (Member), Samantha Geissinger (Member), and Kevin Unruh (Member)

Members Absent: Jennifer Hager (Member), Christal Hall (Member), Heather Unruh (Friends of Sister City).

Additional Present: Finance Director, Kelsey Briand, Harmon Geissinger

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Jennie Hiatt at 6:10pm.

Approval of Agenda

Corina moved to approve the agenda with the addition of add “d. Harmon Geissinger” to #4 and “b. 20th Anniversary Proclamation” to #9, seconded by Mary. All in favor.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes – February 17, 2026

Jerry moved to approve the minutes as written. Corina seconded. All in favor.

Public Comments and Correspondence

- a. News from Omitama – Makoto will let the board know if they want Jerry to present the gift after his speech or at the reception.
- b. Official Correspondence – None
- c. Artist Spotlight – Heather Parks Barclay is the artis that has provided the first of four paintings that we will give as a gift to Omitama. She shared her background with the board. In addition to her paintings, she also provides art classes through the Arts Council of Dickinson County. We would like to give the summer painting at this summer’s delegation. The board decided to have Steam Engine with wheat field for summer (landscape), Brown’s Park for fall (landscape) and Little Ike Park with Christmas Tree for winter (portrait).
- d. Harmon Geissinger – Harmon is a sophomore at Abilene High School and was one of 50 students chosen to go to DC for the 2026 Sister Cities International Youth Leadership Summit. He will be going from June 21st to June 27th. One student was selected from each state. His expenses will be over \$2500 for the stay and the plane ticket. Corina made a motion to pay for Harmon’s expenses in the amount of \$2500 to represent us in Washington, DC, out of the scholarship fund. Jerry seconded. All in favor. City staff will pay online directly to Sister Cities International, the \$1995 that

covers lodging, meals and activities while in DC and city staff will write a check to Samantha Geissinger (mother) for the remainder (\$505) to go towards the plane ticket.

Financial Report

New Balance: \$9,910.80

Kim shared the general fund for Sister City is at \$9,910.80 The scholarship fund has \$8,110.00.

Corina moved to accept the financial report. Kevin seconded. All in favor.

Friends of Sister City

Heather was absent. Jennie shared that the Friends of Sister City changed the fund to an endowed fund. We are now eligible to participate in the Community Foundation's Donate Day.

School Programs

Jerry shared that if the Japan club meets it won't be until the 31st so they may skip March's meeting.

Corina shared that her group of middle schoolers met last week and made a card for the 20-year celebration. The newspaper wants to interview a few of the kids about Sister City leadership groups.

Old Business

- a. Draft Proposed By-laws: Jennie and Kim shared the updated proposed by-laws. The board made a few minor changes including punctuation, spelling, and changing "correspondence secretary" to corresponding secretary" and removing Secretary from elected members of the board. Jennie will also forward by-laws for Kelsey to format. These changes will be made and brought to our April meeting.
- b. Draft Proposed Code: Code was discussed. All looks good but will be brought back for approval at the April meeting.

New Business

- a. 2026 Delegate Planning: Delegates will be here July 22nd – August 5th. Laura Ralph informed the board they would like to host again this year. Hiatt's would be willing to host again this year. Mary would be willing to host but doesn't want to take it away from another family. We will need six host families. Some of the places we could take delegates to were discussed. Jennie will follow-up with SCI for background checks on potential host families. Jennie will check to see if the Longford water order is necessary.
- b. 20th Anniversary Proclamation: The 20th anniversary proclamation was read at the March 9th City Commission meeting, and Jerry will take it with him to the trip to Omitama and present it at their celebration. Corina will send the proclamation ahead of time for translation.

Adjournment

Next meeting: April 14, 2026. Corina made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mary. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:46pm.

Minutes Approved,

Attest:

Sister City Board

Kelsey Briand, Finance Director

DRAFT

CITY OF ABILENE, KANSAS
SISTER CITY BOARD
BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I. *PURPOSE and ORGANIZATION*

Section 1. The *Abilene Sister City Board*, hereinafter referred to as the **Board**, was created by authority of the City Commission of *Abilene, Kansas*, by ordinance 2922, section 1-812.

Section 2. The purpose of the **Board** is to seek, support, coordinate, foster, and develop *Sister City* exchange programs of an educational or charitable nature. The **Board** shall make recommendations to the governing body on matters relating to municipally sponsored programs, exchanges, and activities involving the Abilene/Omitama, Japan *Sister City Program*.

ARTICLE II. *PURPOSE and DUTIES OF THE BOARD*

Section 1. The **Board**, after qualifying as provided by law, shall be vested in the following powers and authority:

- a. To sponsor exchange activities, including social events that provide cultural enrichment of an educational or charitable nature.
- b. To encourage such activities that may result in greater cultural understanding and subsequent business, economic, and governmental relationships.
- c. To appoint such project subcommittees as to fulfill the obligations of the Board best.
- d. To approve all purchases and bills submitted for payment.
- e. To develop a selection process and support mechanisms for AET (Assistant English Teacher)/Friendship Ambassador, as needed.

Section 2. The **Board** shall act on all formal matters as requested, in an official manner.

ARTICLE III. *MEMBERSHIP*

- Section 1.** The **Board** shall consist of no more than **nine (9)** members appointed by the *City Commission* for three (3) year terms.
- Section 2.** Members may be reappointed upon expiration of their three-year term.
- Section 3.** Any vacancies in membership of the **Board** shall be filled by the city commission's appointment of a new member for the unexpired term of a member whose office is vacant.
- Section 4.** All members of the **Board** shall serve **without** compensation.
- Section 5.** The President of *Friends of Sister City* organization (or his/her designee) shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the **Board** and will represent *Friends of Sister City* at each regular meeting for the **Board** without voting rights.
- Section 6.** Any **Board** member who has an unexcused absence for three (3) consecutive regular meetings shall be deemed to have resigned, and the *City Commission* shall appoint a successor.

Written notices hereunder shall be delivered by registered mail to the members' last-known address.

ARTICLE IV. *OFFICERS and THEIR DUTIES*

- Section 1.** The following officers shall be elected from the **Board**. The *officers* shall consist of the **President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary**. The **Secretary** shall be the **City Finance Director** or *designee* and shall serve as an *ex officio* member on the Board, without voting rights.
- Section 2.** Elections will take place following member appointments made at the first City Commission meeting in January. The term of office for officers shall be **one** year. Should a vacancy in any office occur, the **Board** shall present candidates for such vacant office, and such officer will serve until the following January.
- Section 3.** The Duties of the Officers are as follows:
- a. **PRESIDENT:** The **President** shall preside at all meetings of the **Board**, appoint the **chairperson** of standing and special committees,

serve as an *ex-officio* member of all committees, sign and execute all documents of any kind required or authorized to be signed by the **Board**, and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed in these by-laws or as assigned by the **Board**.

- b. **VICE-PRESIDENT:** The **Vice-President** shall act as an aide to the **President** and perform the duties of the **President** in the absence of that officer.
- c. **SECRETARY:** The **Secretary** shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all meetings of the **Board**, maintain and preserve the records of the **Board**, and send notices of meetings to all members of the **Board**.
- d. **TREASURER:** The **Treasurer** shall maintain the financial records of the **Board** and make regular reports to the **Board**.
- e. **CORRESPONDING SECRETARY:** The **Corresponding Secretary** will assist with the **Board's** correspondence as needed.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

- Section 1.** Regular meetings of the **Board** shall be held monthly or as the **Board** deems necessary. Adequate notice of the date and location of meetings shall be given as required by law.
- Section 2.** Special meetings may be called by the **President** or by any three members of the **Board**, provided that all members of the **Board** are given at least twenty-four (24) hours' notice of said special meetings.
- Section 3.** A quorum shall consist of a majority of the appointed and qualified members of the **Board**. The members present at a duly called or held meeting at which a quorum is present may continue to do business until adjournment.
- Section 4.** All meetings of the **Board** shall be conducted in accordance with *Roberts' Rules of Order*, except insofar as modified by these by-laws and the rules and procedures adopted by the **Board**.

ARTICLE VI. *FRIENDS OF SISTER CITY*

The President of *Friends of Sister City*, or a designee, shall report on Friends' activities to the Board at each regular meeting. The **Board** shall in no way be subject to the control or review by *Friends of Sister City*.

ARTICLE VII. *STANDING and SPECIAL COMMITTEES*

Special Committees, as are considered necessary, shall be appointed by the **President** and ratified by the **Board**. Committees may address issues involving, but not limited to, exchange students, scholarships, travel, fundraising, host families, and youth and/or adult delegation.

ARTICLE VIII. *ANNUAL REPORT*

The **Secretary** shall submit an annual report each year, covering the preceding calendar year. Such reports are to be filed with the **City Clerk**.

ARTICLE IX. *AMENDMENTS*

The **Board** may amend these bylaws by a majority vote and approval of the *City Commission*, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting. Each member of the **Board** shall be sent a copy of the proposed amendment with the meeting notice.

1-914. Sister city committee

The Sister City Committee shall consist of nine (9) members who shall be appointed by the Governing Body for three (3) year terms commencing on the second Monday in January, provided that initial appointments shall be for such terms as to allow for annual appointments of three positions. The Sister City Committee shall make recommendations to the Governing Body in matters relating to municipally sponsored programs, exchanges and activities involving the Sister City, Omitama (previously known as Minori), Japan. It shall not be a requirement to reside within the city limits of Abilene, Kansas, to serve on said committee; however, the majority of said committee should reside within the city limits of Abilene, Kansas.

(Ord. 3003; Ord. 3346; Ord. 3458)

➤ *PROPOSED CHANGES:*

1-914. Sister City Board

The Sister City **Board** shall consist of nine (9) members who shall be appointed by the Governing Body for three (3) year terms commencing on the second Monday in January, provided that initial appointments shall be for such terms as to allow for annual appointments of three positions. The Sister City **Board** shall make recommendations to the Governing Body in matters relating to municipally sponsored programs, exchanges and activities involving the Sister City, Omitama (previously known as Minori), Japan. It shall not be a requirement to reside within the city limits of Abilene, Kansas, to serve on said board; however, the majority of said committee should reside within the city limits of Abilene, Kansas, **and all board members must reside within Dickinson County.**

(Ord. 3003; Ord. 3346; Ord. 3458)