

**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.

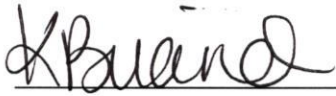
Adjournment

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