

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

**April 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
Abilene Public Library, Jordan Room
209 NW 4th 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), Christal Hall (Member), and Kevin Unruh (Member).

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

Additional Present: Finance Director, Kelsey Briand

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Jennie Hiatt at 6:05 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Corina moved to approve the agenda with the addition of add “e. Harmon Geissinger” to Old Business, seconded by Kevin. All in favor.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2026

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

Public Comments and Correspondence

- a. News from Omitama – Miu has been accepted to be an exchange student for next year. She will be here 5 days before school starts and will attend Chapman High School.
Kariya who works in the city offices with Makoto, board members shared that he worked extra hard and went out of his way to be accommodating to our delegation. He spoke to Corina early on and talked to her about cutting Jerry’s speech in half. He also wanted to talk about the delegates coming. He confirmed that they would only be sending 4 students and 2 adults, but we do not need to limit our delegates the following year. They would like to host as many as possible. They believe it will be Makoto and Shai. He informed Corina that it will cost them \$6k per plane ticket and would like Jerry to look into tickets through our travel agency.
- b. Official Correspondence – Corina received a letter from Makota and read the correspondence aloud at the meeting. In summary, they would like to travel by ground from Dallas, TX to Abilene, KS and would like Abilene to consider assisting with ground travel. Corina will respond with the board’s thoughts on why ground travel would not be recommended.

Financial Report

New Balance: \$9,912.00

Kim shared the general fund for Sister City is at \$9,912. The scholarship fund has \$7,605. Staff shared the \$1995 is on Kelsey's credit card and will show up next month. The balance will be \$5610.00

Friends of Sister City

Heather was absent but Corina shared that Heather said if Friends can help Omitama purchase plane tickets and be reimbursed they would be willing to do that.

School Programs

Jerry shared that he met with the Japan Club today and shared photos and information from his trip in March. He provided each student with chopsticks. He also shared that May 12th will be the last meeting of the Japan Club for this school year.

Corina shared that the Sister City Leadership group met the Thursday after she returned from Japan. She provided them with a bit of Japanese candy and provided the students with letters from Japan. They will also meet this Thursday, April 16th.

Old Business

- a. March 22nd trip to Japan: The group that went shared that they had an excellent trip. They enjoyed spending time with our Japanese friends. Omitama did a great job planning the event. We were included quite a bit in all the anniversary celebrations. They had several activities for our delegation to participate in. Jerry did excellent with his speech. The evening party was wonderful. They provided a gift to the city that the board would like to present to the City Commission (May 11th) and asked if there was a public location to display it. Possibly the table behind the girls in the water department at City Hall.
- b. Draft Proposed By-laws: Jennie shared the draft proposed bylaws with the group. Jerry moved to accept the bylaws as printed. Mary seconded. All in favor. Jerry moved to submit these bylaws to the city commission with the board's approval and recommendation for their approval. Christal seconded. All in favor.
- c. Draft Proposed Code: Kim moved to accept the proposed code as written and seconded by Mary. All in favor. Kim moved to submit to the City Commission with the board's approval and recommendation for their approval. Seconded by Christal. All in favor.
- d. Delegation Planning: Tabled to May meeting.
- e. Harmon Geissinger's trip to DC: Sam updated the board regarding the travel costs for Harmon's trip to SCI in DC. The plane ticket was \$973. The board originally thought it would be around \$600. Jerry moved to cover the difference of \$468.00 of the plane ticket through the Sister City Scholarship fund reimbursed to Sam Geissinger for Harmon. Corina seconded. All in favor.

New Business

None

Adjournment

Next meeting: May 12, 2026 (Kelsey will not be at the next meeting. Corina made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kim. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:07pm.

Minutes Approved,

Attest:


Sister City Board


Kelsey Briand, Finance Director