



**ABILENE OMITAMA SISTER CITY BOARD
JORDAN ROOM, ABILENE PUBLIC LIBRARY, 209 NW FOURTH STREET
SEPTEMBER 8, 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 - August 11, 2026
- 4. Public Comments, Correspondence**
 - a. News from Omitama
 - b. Official Correspondence
- 5. Financial Report - Kim Shafer**
- 6. Friends of Sister City - Heather Unruh**
- 7. School Programs - Corina Ryland and Kim Shafer**
- 8. New Business**
 - a. City Representative Discussion
- 9. Adjournment**

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

**July 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), Kevin Unruh (Member), Samantha Geissinger (Member), and Christal Hall (Member)

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

Additional Present: None

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Jennie Hiatt at 6:03 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Corina moved to approve the agenda as written. Seconded by Kim. All in favor.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes – July 14, 2026

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

Public Comments and Correspondence

- a. News from Omitama – Mr. Kariya said he may be the one to come next time.
- b. Official Correspondence – Jerry received an email with the following information: On Sunday, August 30, 2026, from 2-8 at the Merriam Marketplace, the Kansas City Japan Society will host a Bonodori dance. All are welcome to join. If someone is wanting to learn the Bonodori dance, practices will be held at K-State Student Union on Monday, August 24th @ 7pm and Friday, August 28th @ 7pm.

Financial Report

New Balance: \$9,587.70

Kim shared the general fund for Sister City is at \$9,587.70 and \$5,142 is left in the scholarship fund. Corina moved to accept the financial report. Kevin seconded. All in favor.

Sam informed the board that Jeffrey Haaga is teaching two classes in Japan this year, with 2 different classrooms in 2 different buildings. Sam asked the board if we wanted to make a contribution. Kim moved to contribute \$100 out of the scholarship fund to Jeffrey. We will mail a check to Brenda Haaga, who will in turn get the money to Jeffrey in Japan. Jerry seconded. All in favor.

Friends of Sister City

Heather was absent but Kim shared that Friends of Sister City is taking care of tax and shipping for the additional family t-shirts.

School Programs

Kim shared that she is intending to take over Japan Club at the elementary school. Christal is also thinking about starting something up at Blue Ridge Elementary.

Old Business

- a. Delegation Planning: We received happy faces on the evaluations from the delegates. The board shared there were younger adult delegates this year than in previous years. An unofficial adult meeting was held and the board was told that when we go next year to Japan, Omitama is potentially asking us for a shorter stay, maybe only 8 days and only to send 8 students and 2 adults. Omitama delegates also shared they would like more indoor activities. Omitama will send the same number as this year (4 students and 2 adults) when they come back in 2028. Christal suggested being flexible in the time of year that delegates come. Discussion regarding waivers sent to parents ahead of time was brought up. The board asked Staff to inquire with our city attorney regarding this. It was suggested by the board to ask the mayor or city commission to write a letter about how they feel about the relationship between the two sister cities and also asking Omitama what their intentions are for the future of the relationship. Jennie suggested sending letters to parents of delegates from the board. Jennie also presented the City Commission with the gift on 08/10/2026. Jennie will send the board digital copies of the letter to the commission for their review. The board discussed sending thank you letters and who was going to send which letters. Christal is going to try to get scripts from all the museums we go to and translate them and keep them in a binder. Jennie will also contact the paper about a write-up about the delegation visit. Discover Japan flyers were also asked to be hung up in the schools.

New Business

- a. August 26th Event: Mari, Kim's host mother from last summer is in Chicago and will be here in Abilene August 25-27, 2026. A potluck and kimono dressing will occur on August 26, 2026 at 5:30, possibly at Garfield. All are welcome to attend.

Adjournment

Next Regular meeting: September 8, 2026, at the Abilene Public Library at 6pm. Corina made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kim. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Minutes Approved,

Attest:

Sister City Board

Kelsey Briand, Finance Director

Kelsey Briand

From: Kelsey Briand
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2026 1:27 PM
To: Jennie Hiatt; Kim Shafer; Corina Ryland; Corina Ryland; Heather Unruh; Kevin86 Unruh; Christal Hall; Jerry Rankin; Samantha Geissinger; Mary Montgomery
Subject: Sister City Representative

Good afternoon, all!

I wanted to reach out today, to ask the boards opinion on the Sister City Board city representative. Currently, my daughter's sports schedule does not allow me to be available for a 6pm meeting on Tuesdays and this will likely be the case for entirety of the school year. As the secretary, I know this could be a burden for you all as a board. Here's the options I've come up with that you all can discuss at your next meeting:

- Someone currently on the board can take the minutes each month and send them to me. I can still prepare the agendas and minutes and upload to website and attend as I'm available.
- We could look at alternative days or times (this option obviously affects more people though)
- I can look at finding you a different city representative.

Please let me know your thoughts. Or add it to the agenda and discuss at the meeting and get back to me 😊

Thanks!

Kelsey Briand

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