

Stillwater Sister Cities Council Minutes
March 27, 2025

Stillwater Community Center, Room 100
315 W. 8th
5:00pm

Members Present: Cindy Petree, Debbi Dawson, Jacie Gray, Becky Irby, John Mills, Linda Ely Dale Durham, Bob Burk, Nathan Horton, Matt Payne

Not present: Judy Nelson

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:00pm.

2. Introduction of Guests

Kari Quigley and Jake Erlich – Stillwater Middle School, John Martin - OSU Japanese Club

3. Approval of minutes –February 27, 2025

Motion to accept with corrections to members present made by John Mills, seconded by Debbie Dawson. All votes yes.

4. Discussion/Possible Action

a) OSU Global Studies – Jim Shideler

None

b) CLIC, English Department, Oklahoma State University – Ho’omana (Nathan) Horton

Nathan Horton reported that OSU is working with Shinshu University in Nagano, Japan for students to study in Stillwater in the agriculture and technology areas. Nathan stated there should be 8 students at OSU in Aug/Sept for Service Learning opportunities.

John Mills said he worked with a Japanese student volunteer at Our Daily Bread. The young man was very interested in this Stillwater food bank and helped several clients.

c) OSU Japanese Student Association/Japanese Club – Jacie Gray

Jacie Gray reminded the council of the Japanese Language Club speech contest in partnership with Japan America Society of OK scheduled for Sunday, April 6.

She will be presenting her 3-year interview research on the connections between Kameoka and Stillwater in two identical symposiums at OSU. Council members are invited to attend.

Oklahoma State University Undergraduate Research Symposium
ConocoPhillips OSU Alumni Center, Tuesday, April 22nd, 2:45-3:45 pm

Wentz Research Symposium
Student Union Ballroom, Friday, April 25th, 2:50 – 3:55pm

Council members are invited to Jacie's come and go OSU graduation party in the Kameoka Room of the Community Center on May 8 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Jacie will be moving to Kameoka, Japan on August 1, 2025 to serve as International Exchange Coordinator for the city. She will attend the U.S.- Japan Sister Cities Summit in Osaka in September.

d) Discussion, planning, and possible action regarding Sister Cities Council participation in the upcoming student exchange program between Stillwater Middle School and Kameoka, Japan.

Kari Quigley and Jacie Gray reported that Asuka in Kameoka has asked how citizens there can contribute to families here who lost their homes in the April 18th wildfires. It was discussed that the best possible way was by wire transfer, but it is unknown to whom the wire transfer should be sent.

Kari and Jacie have been instrumental in asking Kameoka that SMS not miss a year of the exchange in order to keep the momentum high after the 2023-2024 visits. Jake Erlich has organized a 501 (C)(3) Kameoka Booster Club to support the SMS Sister School Exchange Program with Angela Gamble as president and Christine Murthy as CFO. Kari will retire at the end of the school year and Jake will take over as Sister School Coordinator.

Kari and Jake reported that the applications for teachers to go to Kameoka had received a slow response. The mandatory parent meeting for students wishing to apply to go to Kameoka will be March 31st with completed applications due April 7th. Teachers' evaluations will be due by April 11th. Applications will be screened on April 14th to determine which students will be invited to interview. Interviews will be held on Monday, April 21st, with selections made that day. Kari asked for volunteers to help with the screening and with the interviews. Nathan Horton, Cindy Petree, Becky Irby, and Jacie Gray volunteered to help with one or both tasks.

SMS plans to send 5-7 students and 2-3 teachers, October 11-19, 2025. Jake Ehrlich will head the delegation. Funds need to be raised for this because currently the school has \$13,000 in the bank, which is not enough to fund the exchange trip this fall.

Dr. Matthew Payne and Jake Ehrlich reported on plans for the Middle School exchange program fundraiser to collect parking fees at Stillwater Medical Center for April 10-13, 2025, Boys from OK concert. Maps of the SMC parking lot were distributed, and council members were asked to sign up by April 4th and encourage others to participate. Workers will be supplied vests and 22 people per day are required to man the zones. A Sign-up Genius will be created and distributed so people can volunteer. Council members were encouraged to help with the parking and encourage friends to also help.

e) Discussion, planning, and possible action regarding the Stillwater Sister Cities 40th anniversary between Stillwater, OK and Kameoka, Japan.

A committee of Cindy Petree, Becky Irby, Matthew Payne, and Nathan Horton will be formed to work on the 40th anniversary ideas under consideration for the Stillwater celebration. Ongoing suggestions include restoring the Kameoka Trail signs, a 40th anniversary display at Stillwater Library and the Japanese Bazaar for Children at the Community Center.

5. Council/staff announcements of items of interest to the Council.

Council members expressed appreciation to Kameoka City for collecting donations for those affected by the wildfires in Stillwater.

Linda Ely mentioned the March 6th death of former council member Pauline Kopecky who taught at OSU-K and donated her collection of Kokeshi dolls on display in the Kameoka Room.

6. Adjourn

Motion by Matthew Payne, seconded by John Mills. All votes yes. Meeting adjourned at 6:25pm.