

MINUTES FOR THE
SISTER CITIES ADVISORY BOARD
September 3, 2025
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Roll Call

Present:

- Ross Chambless
- Stacey Adams
- Matilyn Mortensen
- Nicole Gallo
- Sheri Sorenson
- Ahimara Suarez
- Rose Kjesbo
- Annie Quan
- John Wilson

Absent:

- Jane Kim

Staff Present:

- Katherine Matheson
- Mariah Johnson
- Jake Maxwell
- Olivia Johnson

Approval of the July 2, 2025, Sister Cities Board Minutes

Board Member Gallo requested more consistency in Minutes in the future. Board Co-Chair Adams motioned, Board Member Mortensen seconded, unanimous approval.

Public Comment

Shoko Smith and Michael Mikulich introduced themselves and described their interest in the Sister Cities program.

Staff Report

OPMA Training

Katie Matheson noted that OPMA trainings must be completed by all board members every year. She reminded the board to complete their trainings as soon as possible and send in completed certificates to staff.

Festa Italiana

Katie Matheson requested board member sign ups for the upcoming Festa Italiana.

Staff Introductions

Department of Economic Development Deputy Director Jake Maxwell and Sister Cities Special Projects Assistant Olivia Johnson introduced themselves to the board as new support staff. Katie Matheson noted that this meeting would be her last as support staff for the board.

International Peace Gardens Korean Pavilion Donation

Olivia Johnson provided an update on the visit to Salt Lake City from a delegation from the Gyeonggi Province. She noted that the scheduled meetings were productive and that the permitting process is proceeding. DED will be coordinating the delivery of supplies and the arrival of Korean artisans for construction of the pavilion next year.

Pen Pal Program

Board Co-Chair Chambless noted that a teacher in Salt Lake City has been identified to work with a classroom in Japan and that per diems for the teachers will be disbursed through a foundation.

Board Member Kjesbo noted that she has met with volunteers via Zoom to connect with Peruvian classrooms and is still working on establishing relationships.

Board Co-Chair Adams said she is meeting with contacts soon to establish connections with Ukrainian classrooms.

Reestablishment of Sister City relationship with Quezon City, Philippines

Co-Chair Chambless noted that Mayor Mendenhall received a letter from the Mayor of Quezon City expressing interest in renewing Salt Lake's Sister City relationship and that the Sister Cities team has been working with community groups in Salt Lake City to establish support. Katie Matheson noted that this is the first time a Sister City has been brought out of Emeritus status and the steps involved in this process.

Establishment of Sister City relationship with Guadalajara, Mexico

Katie Matheson said she has spoken with the Consul General of Mexico, Holy Cross Ministries, and others to show community support for the relationship. She said that the goal is to establish a Friendship City, which can be reassessed in three years.

Current Sister City Updates

Izhevsk, Russia

- This relationship has been put into emeritus status due to lack of contact

Chernivtsi, Ukraine

- Board Member Sorensen stated that the Utah-Ukrainian Association (UUA) helped establish a Ukrainian Student Association at the University of Utah, organize a screening of No Sleep Til Kyiv, and host a Ukrainian Independence Day celebration. They will also be continuing on with ESL and online therapy programs.
- Katie Matheson stated that no date had been set for a possible visit to Salt Lake City by the Ukrainian delegation, though the Mayor's Office and City Council were involved in planning. Possible agenda items for a visit include meetings around biotech, business, and education, with a potential focus on post-traumatic healthcare, possibly through HR exchanges or connecting hospitals and the University of Utah. Co-Chair Adams noted that local resident Alan Lipp had recently visited Chernivtsi and that she would meet with him for updates.

Keelung, Taiwan

- Board Member Quan and staff will work on connecting to the World Trade Center for contacts in Keelung.

Matsumoto, Japan

- Board Co-Chair Chambless and Olivia Johnson participated in a Zoom call connecting local sake manufacturer Tsuki Sake with Matsumoto's Sister City and Chamber of Commerce staff and will continue to coordinate them as their partnership develops, and as Japantown and the downtown Entertainment District plans proceed.

Torino, Italy

- No updates

Trujillo, Peru

- Board Member Kjesbo said the Pen Pal program is the focus for now

Adjournment

Board Member Mortensen motions to adjourn. Co-Chair Adams seconds. All are in favor of adjourning.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ross Chambless".

Ross Chambless, Co-Chair

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Sister Cities Advisory Board meeting held on September 3, 2025.
