

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Sister Cities Commission**

6:30 PM
November 12, 2025

Steelhead Room, 235 1st Ave.
SE, Issaquah

MINUTES

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners:

Stephanie Angula
Victor Bello
Shari Gehrke (excused absence)
Brandon Grossi
Maryann Heil
Christian Nilsen (excused absence)
Ryan Opitz
Wendy Pickering

Pam Robinson - Alternate
Ellen Wunderley – Alternate (excused absence)

Administrative Staff:

Gillian Straub, Staff Liaison

Youth Advisory Board Representative:

Sanvi Madan (excused absence)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Minutes of October 8, 2025 Meeting.

The minutes were APPROVED as presented by unanimous consent.

- b) Minutes of November 8, 2025 Special Meeting.

The minutes were APPROVED as presented by unanimous consent.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

None.

REGULAR BUSINESS

- a) **Follow up from Retreat (D)**

Presented by:

Stephanie Angula & Ryan Opitz, Co-Chairs

Co-chairs summarized the work of the retreat on November 8, 2025 and opened the discussion to what project ideas generated at the retreat should be prioritized in 2026 and which commissioners will lead or join a subcommittee for each project.

The Commission moved to bring a visiting artist from Sunndal to the 2026 Salmon Days. The motion was approved.

The following projects and leads/subcommittee members were noted in the meeting:

- Update Website – Victor, Pam, [need 1 more member]
- Cultural artifact exchange – Brandon, Ryan
- Travel assistance – Wendy, Maryann, Victor
- Sustainability & youth project – Wendy, Sanvi [need to confirm]
- Book club with library – Ellen, Christian
- Develop resources & relationships – Ryan
- Preschool-to-preschool program – Christian
- Visiting artist from Sunndal – Stephanie, [will need 1-2 more members, all commissioners expected to assist]

b) **2026 Young Artists & Authors Showcase Decision and Subcommittee Membership (A)**

Presented by:

Stephanie Angula & Ryan Opitz, Co-Chairs

The Commission discussed their involvement with the Young Artists & Authors Showcase (YAAS) and how it connects to Chefchaouen and Sunndal. Opportunities include doing this every other year, partnering with the Arts Commission, or offering YAAS & the visiting artist to Chefchaouen to see what they want to do.

The Commission moved to postpone YAAS until 2027, to work on the connections with the sister cities in 2026, to ensure submissions include artists from Issaquah and one of the sister cities. The motion was approved.

REPORTS

a) **Sunndal, Chefchaouen & Sister Cities International Monitoring**

Presented by:

Brandon Grossi, SSC Member

b) **Nordic Museum Contact/Outing**

Presented by:

Pam Robinson, SSC Member

Julfest is the 21st – 23, Stephanie will organize the group interest.

c) **Joint Sustainability Project**

Presented by:

Gillian Straub, Management Analyst

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Parking Lot

The next meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2025 - location change likely.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.

