



Washington Association of Telecommunications Officers & Advisors

A professional organization of individuals and organizations serving citizens in the development, regulation, and administration of cable television and other telecommunication systems.

WATOA Board Meeting Minutes Sept. 24, 2025

1. Call to Order – 2:07 p.m.
2. Roll Call of Officers

WATOA Board Position	Board Member	Present	Absent
President	Mike Connor, City of Kirkland	X	
Vice-President	Ben Skudlarek, City of Bellingham		X
Board Secretary	Megan Hutton, Pierce County	X	
Treasurer	Alice Lawson, City of Seattle	X	
Regional Rep: District 1 (North & Puget)	Candy Galindo, City of Mount Vernon	X	
Regional Rep: District 2 (King)	Patti Belle, City of Kent	X	
Regional Rep: District 3 (Puget & Coast)	George Geyer, Kitsap County		X
Regional Rep: District 4 (Southwest)	Jim Demmon, City of Vancouver		X
Regional Rep: District 5 (Rainier Valley)	Jon Baker, Pierce County		X
Regional Rep: District 6 (Central)	Ben Faubion, City of Ellensburg	X	
Regional Rep: District 7 (Northeast)	Jessica Fisher, City of Spokane	X	
Regional Rep: District 8 (Tri-Cities)	Mark Ingham, City of Richland	X	
Regional Rep: District 9 (At-Large)	Edgar Riebe, Seattle Public Schools	X	
Past-President	None in 2025		

3. Approval of the agenda
 - a. Approved!
4. Approval of minutes
 - a. 7/23/25 minutes approved
5. President's report – Mike Connor
 - a. NATOA Conference – attended legislative sessions (sending summary)
 - b. NATOA offering the production conference classes online for \$\$ (recommended the caption session)
 - c. NATOA Washington Meet-Up was well attended (13 people, NATOA current and future presidents attended too!)
 - d. Feedback from WATOA Washington Meet-Up - Asking for regular virtual meetings, open board meetings, virtual trainings, and regular chapter meetings.
6. Vice President – Ben Skudlarek
 - a. n/a
7. Secretary's Report – Megan Hutton
 - a. Pierce County Comms Director position opening up
 - b. RCC looking at different funding models & reaching out to municipalities for ideas!
 - c. OATOA (Oregon) is looking to restart. They are interested in collaboration & attending a possible WATOA Conference.
8. Treasurer's report – Alice Lawson
 - a. July balance - \$21,209.76 balance
 - b. August balance - \$21,263.49 balance
 - c. 30 agencies & 70 members
9. Committee Reports
 - a. Committee Assignments

- i. Membership & Engagement - Jessica, Patti, Mike
Covers: website, membership, overall messaging, ListServ, promotional materials
 - 1. Mike is proposing Board recruitment under this committee.
 - 2. Website edits – need to add minutes
 - 3. ListServe more activity – maybe announce when meetings are up?
 - 4. Annual Board Meeting - Must be announced a month in advance. Looking for topics.
 - a. NATOA Conference session - suggested the caption session.
 - b. Funding ideas – Massachusetts State Bill and possibility of hiring someone to draft the bill
 - c. Location – PCTV studio in Tacoma
 - d. Proposed date – November 14
- ii. Education - Edgar, Megan, Ben S, Jim
Covers: PEG production, equipment recommendations, events, conferences, webinars
 - 1. n/a
- iii. Legislative/Policy - Alice, Jon, Ben F, Candy
Covers: advocate to State govt, monitor Federal govt, propose bills, lobbying
 - 1. Streaming Fees – exploring models from Oregon, Minnesota, Massachusetts
 - a. [Massachusetts State Bill H.106](#) – proposal to create a streaming fee & create a state revenue fund that splits it three ways
 - 1. general fund state
 - 2. general fund local governments
 - 3. community media organizations
 - b. Suggested hiring an expert to help draft a similar bill
 - i. Would need to edit the verbiage
 - 1. Include cities and counties
 - 2. Edit state general fund percentage?
 - c. Email Motion Coming!
 - i. Motion language – WATOA’s Legislative committee moves that the Board approve funds not to exceed \$9,300 to engage Michael Bradley, with Bradley Werner, LLC, for specialized legal services to draft legislation.
 - d. This could be an **Annual Board Meeting topic!**
 - i. Work on talking points for bill support
 - ii. Candy – [draft talking points](#)
 - 2. Over the air channel – Kittitas County has a tax to fund this. Could this be a funding mechanism?
 - a. Reaching out to Kittitas County for more info
 - 3. Traffic Impact Fees – this is a public works fee. Maybe add a specific PEG fee?
 - 4. Right of Way – even the playing field for the cable providers

10. Old Business

11. New Business

- a. George is retiring!
- b. Jeff Lueders conversation – PEG funding & state lobbying strategies
 - i. Discussing how PEG funding is used.
 - 1. Patti/Kent – Funding not connected to staff, used for equipment
 - 2. Alice/Seattle Channel – Exploring partnerships, including with the library



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3. Jeff/Tacoma – PEG funding goes to the general fund. As money decreases so does the size of the staff.
 - ii. CCX Media in Minnesota – 40% reduction in subscribers, made \$1.1M budget cut, and is cutting staff.
 1. 5-year Comcast extension – switched to percentage of gross revenue instead of subscription fees.
 - iii. Staff Co-Opt idea – list of staff from different agencies (include their rates) that can help with filming
 - iv. Right of Way – even the playing field for the cable providers
12. Good of the order
13. Next Meeting – Oct. 22
14. Adjournment – 3:19 p.m.