



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 March 25, 2026

1. Call to Order – 2:07pm
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)	Vacant- (Kitsap area)		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 2026		

3. Approval of the agenda
 - a. Approved
4. Approval of minutes
 - a. 2/25/26 minutes, approved, as amended
5. President's report – Mike Connor
 - a. Annual WATOA Board Retreat – April 17
 - i. Location: Kirkland City Hall 10am-3pm
 - ii. Megan motion for food, Jessica 2nd: up to \$400, not to exceed to cover food and beverage for the board retreat. Approved.
6. Vice President – Ben Skudlarek
 - a. None
7. Secretary's Report – Megan Hutton
 - a. Megan to get more info on the Post-NAB event in Seattle on May 20, see if we can get a side room for a WATOA networking moment while we're there.
8. Treasurer's report – Alice Lawson
 - a. 1/31/26 balance - \$15,995.56
 - b. 2/28/26 adjusted balance - \$16,729.56
 - c. 2026 - 12 agencies & 27 members (38% of 2025)
9. Committee Reports
 - a. Committee Assignments, Membership & Engagement - Jessica, Patti, Mike
Covers: website, membership, overall messaging, ListServ, promotional materials
 - i. Region 3 still vacant. Colleen Mike with BKAT was suggested. Megan to reach out.
 - b. Education - Edgar, Megan, Ben S, Jim
Covers: PEG production, equipment recommendations, events, conferences, webinars

- i. WCAG 2.1 webinar training (summer-fall this year)
 - 1. Wait to plan for
- ii. Meet-up at Post-NAB May 20th
- c. Legislative/Policy - Alice, Jon, Ben F, Candy
 - Covers: advocate to State govt, monitor Federal govt, propose bills, lobbying
 - i. State updates: Session ended
 - 1. Some digital equity work, how Office of Commerce will do that work. Board will use the retreat to refine talking points and providing to legislators. Work with Sabrina Roach on some strategy ahead of pitching to legislators.
 - ii. Federal updates:
 - 1. Fill out survey from NATOA – sent to WATOA members on the listserv
 - 2. The conservative group of Congress is looking to move legislation that removes local controls related to permitting fees. This only affects wired broadband. Intention is how BEAD money is spent. If shot clocks are put on building out broadband infrastructure, jurisdiction permitting depts may not have enough time to thoroughly review the permit requests.
 - a. There's a question if this is an unfunded mandate. There's a threshold at the federal govt of how much impact is needed to be declared an unfunded mandate....which would encourage members of Congress to reconsider.
 - iii. WCAG 2.1
 - 1. There was a discussion among the Board about new rules taking effect April 24th 2026 for large entities (2027 for smaller) and what jurisdictions are doing to prepare. PDFs, audio description was discussed for video, council meetings and social media platforms. No social platform currently has secondary audio channels available yet. Educating city/county staff was also discussed.

10. Old Business

- a. None

11. New Business

- a. None

12. Good of the order

- a. None

13. Next Meeting –April 17 Board Retreat 10am-3pm (will replace the regularly scheduled 4/22 meeting)

14. Adjournment – 2:57pm