

WASHINGTON STATE B A R A S S O C I A T I O N

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING MINUTES

Walla Walla, WA

July 18, 2025

Call to Order and Welcome ([link](#))

The meeting of the Board of Governors of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) was called to order by President Sunitha Anjilvel on Friday, July 18, at 10:40 a.m. Governors in attendance were:

Francis Adewale
Matthew Dresden
Tom Ahearne
Kevin Fay
Kristina Larry
Todd Bloom
Nam Nguyen
Allison Widney
Jordan Couch
Kari Petrsek
Emily Arneson
Parvin Price
Alain Villeneuve
Chris Bhang

Officers and Executive Staff in attendance were President Sunitha Anjilvel, Immediate-Past President Dan Clark, Executive Director Terra Nevitt, Chief Communications and Outreach Officer Sara Niegowski, Director of Finance Tiffany Lynch, Chief Disciplinary Counsel Doug Ende, Chief Regulatory Counsel Renata Garcia, Director of Advancement Kevin Plachy, Chief Equity & Justice Officer Diana Singleton, General Counsel Laurie Powers, Deputy Director Dua Abudiab, IT Director Jon Dawson, and HR Director & Chief Culture Officer Glynnis Klinefelter Sio.

Also in attendance were Alec Stephens, Nancy Hawkins, Rex Nolte, Aziza Ozgoren, Jennifer Olegario, Brent Williams-Ruth, Catherine Schur, Lesli Ashley, Julianne Unite, Nicole Chen, Noah Beatge, Sanjay Walvekar, Chelle Gegax, Carl Snodgrass, Michelle Mendoza, Riley Gavigan, Alex Reaganson, Breen Beggs, Mason Ji and Janta Steele.

President's Report ([link](#))

President Anjilvel opened with a moment of silence honoring retired Washington Supreme Court Justice Charles Wiggins and his contributions to the bench and legal community.

Public Comment ([link](#))

Brent Williams-Ruth raised the idea of a legislatively-created pooled insurance program for small firms and licensed professionals, noting the disparity in coverage access for firms with fewer than 100 employees. Governors and guests suggested engaging the Solo and Small Practice Section and exploring inclusion of legal aid organizations. Director Plachy reported that the Member Engagement Council will discuss insurance options at its next meeting. Members of the Board raised concerns about data requirements and complexity, and a recommendation for expert analysis was noted.

Executive Director's Report ([link](#))

Executive Director Nevitt referred to her written report and introduced Chief Communications and Outreach Officer Niegowski to provide an update on the Rule of Law Ambassador Program. Highlights included a statewide Law Day event, a constitutional law CLE with over 2,000 participants, and upcoming speaker series and resources aimed at promoting civil dialogue and countering misinformation. Gov. Ahearne emphasized the importance of ensuring the program aligns with WSBA's mission. General Counsel Powers briefed the Board on the amicus brief that will be filed in Perkins Coie LLP v. U.S. Department of Justice, advising that the appeal is pending and a briefing schedule will be set shortly.

Consent Calendar ([link](#))

President Anjilvel presented the consent calendar with an invitation for the board members to request discussion of any items as needed. Gov. Petrasek moved to approve the consent calendar. The motion passed unanimously.

Budget and Audit Committee Items ([link](#))

First Draft of FY26 Budget

Treas. Kari Petrasek made an opening statement, and Director of Finance Tiffany Lynch presented the first draft of the FY26 budget. The draft anticipates a net loss of approximately \$1.5 million, similar to the FY25 budget, however there are changes in the amount of designated reserves used for special projects and facilities. Key changes to expenses include a 2% increase in salaries, a reduction in retirement contribution rates, and increased IT costs for a new association management system. The primary change in revenue is an increase to license fees from the \$10 increase to the full active fee effective January 1, 2026. Director Lynch addressed questions asked by Board members and noted that the final version of the budget would be presented in September with further changes that will reduce the budgeted net loss.

License Fee Policy

Director Lynch highlighted the changes from the prior draft which include that the proposal's name has changed from "philosophy" to "policy" and explained adjustments in language regarding fee growth. Gov. Nam Nguyen moved to approve the second reading of the License Fee Policy as presented. The motion passed unanimously. Gov. Kevin Fay was not present for the vote.

Proposed Amendments to the WSBA Facilities Advisory Subcommittee Charter

Director Lynch introduced recommendations to allocate \$150,000 annually to the facilities reserve and the proposed changes to the Facilities Advisory Subcommittee charter, including timelines for recommendations related to leases and real estate purchases. Nancy Hawkins suggested revision of the conflict-of-interest policy to include personal and professional associates of committee members to ensure independent advice. Gov. Nguyen moved to approve the amended Facilities Advisory Subcommittee charter. The motion passed unanimously. Gov. Alain Villeneuve was not present for the vote.

License Fee Exemption Based on Financial Need ([link](#))

Executive Director Nevitt introduced the first reading of a proposal to permit license fee exemptions for members demonstrating financial need, a topic previously discussed during four Board meetings. Gov. Jordan Couch moved to add the proposal to the consent calendar for the September meeting. However, concerns were raised about the irregularity of amending bylaws via the consent calendar, especially considering potential fiscal impacts. Despite these concerns, it was noted that the Board members would still receive notice and have the opportunity to pull items from the consent calendar. The motion passed unanimously.

Interview and Selection of FY26 Treasurer ([link](#))

Executive Director Nevitt explained the election process. Gov. Nam Nguyen and Gov. Alain Villeneuve each presented their qualifications and priorities for the Treasurer role. Both candidates addressed questions posed by Board members. Ballots were collected and counted by Executive Director Nevitt with assistance from Alec Stephens and Director Niegowski. President Anjilvel announced that Gov. Nam Nguyen was elected as WSBA FY26 Treasurer. The Board expressed appreciation for both candidates' willingness to serve.

Proposed Fees for Entity Regulation Pilot Project ([link](#))

Chief Regulatory Counsel Renata Garcia and Chair of the Practice of Law Board Leslie Ashley presented the proposed fee structure for Washington's Entity Regulation Pilot Project. The proposal included a tiered fee model with application fees of \$2,000 for general entities and \$1,000 for access to justice-focused entities, and annual participation fees of \$5,000 and \$2,500, respectively. The fees aim to maintain revenue neutrality and ensure accessibility, particularly for entities serving low-income populations. The Board discussed the criteria for determining which entities are access-to-justice focused, the feasibility of basing fees on entity income, and the potential for the pilot project to attract a significant number of applications. Concerns were raised about the adequacy of staffing and budget projections. Gov. Kevin Fay moved to approve the fees as outlined, with proration and refundability to be addressed later. The motion passed 12 to 1 with one abstention. Gov. Kristina Larry was not present for the vote.

Recommendation from Member Engagement Council to Change WSBA Fiscal Policy to Allow Purchase of Alcohol with Section Funds ([link](#))

Gov. Matthew Dresden presented a recommendation from the Member Engagement Council regarding a change in WSBA fiscal policy to allow the purchase of alcohol with section funds, highlighting that a

majority of section leaders support reverting to the pre-2016 policy, which permitted sections to use section-collected funds for alcohol purchases. The proposal had been unanimously approved by the Member Engagement Council and the Budget and Audit Committee. Some Board members raised concerns about the potential legal and financial risks associated with the policy change, with some governors advocating for a discussion in executive session to address these issues. Gov. Emily Arneson moved to table the vote until after executive session. The motion passed 12 to 1 with one abstention. Gov. Larry was not present for the vote.

Washington Young Lawyer Committee (WYLC) Proposed Bylaw Amendment to Young Lawyer Title and Definition ([link](#))

WYLC Chair-Elect Alex Reaganon, Chair Mason Ji, and Member Janta Steele presented recommended amendments to the WYLC bylaws. The amendments would change the term “young lawyer” to “new member,” eliminate age restrictions, include any member within their first 10 years of licensure in Washington State, and include LLLT and LPO members. This initiative, driven by a five-year effort to enhance inclusivity and diversity, was supported by survey data and comparisons with other jurisdictions. The Board engaged in a robust discussion, addressing the benefits of expanding access to programs and services and potential impact of broader inclusion on member dues. Gov. Couch moved to approve the amendments. The motion passed unanimously. Gov. Larry was not present for the vote.

Executive Session ([link](#))

At 3:38 p.m., the Board entered executive session under WSBA Bylaw VII.B.7.a.1-6 to receive legal advice on the revised legislative and rulemaking comment policy and on the Member Engagement Council’s fiscal policy recommendation regarding section funds for alcohol. The session ended at 4:15 p.m., and the Board returned to public session at 4:18 p.m.

Upon resumption, Gov. Parvin Price moved to approve the recommendation from the Member Engagement Council to change WSBA Fiscal Policy to allow purchase of alcohol with section funds. The motion passed 10 to 4. Gov. Larry was not present for the vote.

Review Revised Legislation and Rulemaking Comment Policy ([link](#))

Nancy Hawkins, as liaison from the family law section, expressed concerns about requiring uniform section positions when sections may hold divergent views, and about Supreme Court boards not being subject to the same restrictions—potentially risking legal challenges. She urged direct engagement with the Court to harmonize policies. The policy will return to the Board for second reading.

Governor Roundtable and Meeting Feedback ([link](#))

During the Governor's Roundtable, President Anjilvel expressed gratitude to the Board for their dedication and cohesiveness. Gov. Arneson welcomed the Board to Walla Walla, sharing personal ties to the area. She suggested to the Governance Committee consider a 12-month limit between first and second readings of proposals, citing the Young Lawyers agenda item as an example of a long interval between readings. Alec Stephens suggested that documentation supporting proposed policy changes clarify how the Board’s action will align with the organization’s mission. Gov. Rathbone and Gov. Couch discussed the importance of innovative thinking and engaging youth in the legal profession, sharing a

successful outreach initiative. Gov. Couch shared survey results on public representation on the Board of Governors, indicating mixed opinions and suggesting alternative methods for public engagement.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Anjilvel adjourned the meeting at 4:42 p.m. on Friday, July 18, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Terra Nevitt

Terra Nevitt

WSBA Executive Director & Secretary



**Board of Governors Meeting – Motions List
Walla Walla, WA
July 18, 2025**

1. Approve the consent calendar. Passed unanimously.
2. Approve the second reading of the License Fee Policy. Passed unanimously.
3. Approve amendments to the Facilities Advisory Subcommittee Charter. Passed unanimously.
4. Add the license fee exemption proposal to the September consent calendar. Passed unanimously.
5. Approve proposed fees for the entity regulation pilot project. Passed 12 to 1 with one abstention.
6. Table action on the fiscal policy permitting purchase of alcohol with section funds until after executive session. Passed 12 to 1 with one abstention.
7. Approve WYLC bylaw amendments. Passed unanimously.
8. Approve the Member Engagement Council recommendation permitting sections to use funds for alcohol purchases. Passed 10 to 4.