

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING MINUTES

Port Angeles, WA

May 2, 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, May 2, at 9:05 a.m. Governors in attendance were:

Chris Bhang
Mary Rathbone
Matthew Dresden
Tom Ahearne
Kevin Fay
Kristina Larry
Todd Bloom
Nam Nguyen
Jordan Couch
Kari Petrasek
Emily Arneson
Parvin Price

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

Also in attendance were Adely Ruiz, Andrea Jarmon, Andy Anderson, Dan Crystal, Dan Coon, Aziza Ozgoren, Brent Williams-Ruth, Catherine Schur, Jennifer Olegario, Julianne Unite, Justin Bingham, Nancy Hawkins, Nicole Chen, Nicole Gustine, Miryam Gordon, Paula Emery, Paris Eriksen, Raina Wagner, Rex Nolte, Sharon Sakamoto, Shelly Bynum, Toby Marshall and Tracy Flood

The WSBA is committed to full access and participation by persons with disabilities to Board of Governors meetings. If you require accommodation for these meetings, please contact accommodations@wsba.org.

President Anjilvel opened the meeting with a memorial recognition of Justice Susan Owens, noting her service on the Washington Supreme Court and her contributions to justice and equity.

Executive Session ([link](#))

At 9:11 a.m., the Board entered executive session under WSBA Bylaw VII.B.7.a.1-6 to receive legal advice. The session ended at 9:21 a.m., and the Board returned to the public session.

Member & Public Comments ([link](#))

Judge Andrea Jarmon commented on WSBA's support for county and affinity bar associations and commented on an APEX award nomination. Brent Williams-Ruth raised concerns about the structure of executive sessions, suggested changes to the president-elect's role and BOG appointment terms and questioned the definition of "technical assistance" in legislative matters.

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

President Anjilvel reported on Law Day 2025 activities, noting participation in thirteen events statewide and an estimated 1,200 attendees.

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

Executive Director Nevitt referred to her written report and invited questions. She also recognized Heather Sprouse, WSBA's new Community & Engagement Specialist, and summarized the Bar Leaders Summit, which drew over 60 participants from various bar associations.

Consent Calendar ([link](#))

Executive Director Nevitt introduced the consent calendar for approval. Immediate Past-President Dan Clark requested removal of the APEX Awards for separate discussion. Gov. Kari Petrasek moved to approve the consent calendar, excluding the APEX Awards. The motion passed unanimously.

Interview & Selection of President-Elect ([link](#))

Executive Director Nevitt described the election process. Candidate Kari Petrasek spoke about her experience, equity and justice priorities, and plans for rural outreach. She responded to questions from the Board regarding her goals and time management plans. Ballots were collected by Executive Director Nevitt, and votes were counted with the assistance of Parliamentarian Alec Stevens and Immediate Past-President Clark. President Anjilvel announced that Kari Petrasek was elected as the FY26 President-Elect.

Second Reading: Equity and Justice Plan ([link](#))

DEI Council Co-Chairs Raina Wagner and Nam Nguyen, with Planning Committee Co-Chairs Sharon Sakamoto and Miriam Gordon, presented the revised Equity and Justice Plan. Gov. Tom Ahearne moved to change the title to "Justice for All." This motion was debated, with arguments highlighting the importance of maintaining the term "equity" to reflect the plan's goals and values. Motion failed 8 to 4. Gov. Jordan Couch moved to approve the plan as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

FY25 Reforecast Budget ([link](#))

Treas. Petrasek and Director Tiffany Lynch presented the FY25 reforecast for the General Fund, CLE Fund, and Client Protection Fund (excluding the Sections Fund). Adjustments included a \$25,000 decrease in revenue, a \$259,000 increase in expenses, and a net reserve use increase of \$284,000. Gov. Fay moved to approve the reforecast. The motion passed unanimously.

First Reading: License Fee Philosophy ([link](#))

Treas. Petrasek and Director Lynch presented updates to the proposed license fee philosophy and resources including a dedicated webpage and communication one-pager. Discussion focused on member education, fee adjustment timing, and the need for transparent communication. Further member feedback will be gathered before the next reading.

Interim Report of the Member Well-Being Task Force ([link](#))

Task Force Chair Justin Bingham reported on survey development and the work group structure. The Task Force remains on schedule to deliver its final report by March 2026. Governors discussed mental health initiatives and the possibility of a wellness summit in Washington State. The Board expressed appreciation for the Task Force's progress and commitment to timely completion.

Recommendation Re: Client Protection Fund Assessment and Practice Rule 15 Changes ([link](#))

Director Lynch and Treas. Petrasek presented recommendations from the Client Protection Fund Board. The key proposals included maintaining the Client Protection Fund assessment at \$20 for 2026, increasing the initial gift payment from \$5,000 to \$10,000, and raising the per claim limit on gifts from \$150,000 to \$250,000. These recommendations were approved by the Budget and Audit Committee. The Board discussed the implications of these changes, noting the fund's current balance of over \$5 million and the historical context of the claim limit increase. Gov. Couch moved to adopt the recommendations. The motion passed 11 to 1.

WSBA Governor At-Large ([link](#))

Executive Director Nevitt noted that the DEI Council forwarded two candidates for the at-large seat and that the bylaws allow the Board to add more candidates if fewer than three are forwarded. After discussion, including concerns about past election processes and the importance of respecting the Council's vetting, Gov. Couch moved to approve the two candidates as proposed by the DEI Council. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention. At-Large candidates are Christopher Bhang and Uzma Hamid.

Amicus Curiae Request Re: *In Re Detention of ME* ([link](#))

General Counsel Laurie Powers presented the request, highlighting the urgency due to the upcoming briefing deadline. Toby Marshall, representing King County Department of Public Defense, emphasized the importance of adhering to WSBA standards for indigent defense, particularly regarding caseload limits and judicial influence. After discussion, Gov. Couch moved to table action pending additional information and member input, with a decision due by June 1. The motion passed 7 to 5.

First Reading: Proposed Amendments to WSBA Bylaws Re Committees ([link](#))

Chief Regulatory Counsel Renata Garcia presented a proposed amendment to the WSBA Bylaws concerning committee membership eligibility. The amendment aims to align Article IX with previously approved changes in Article III, allowing inactive, honorary, and pro bono members to serve on WSBA committees, including as chair or vice chair. Executive Director Nevitt suggested to place the amendment on the consent calendar for the next meeting to expedite the process. The Board expressed support for the amendment, recognizing its potential to alleviate challenges in filling committee positions. No objections were raised, and the proposal will proceed to a second reading.

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

Governors discussed public member inclusion on regulatory bodies, revisions to the oath for new WSBA members, and guidelines for section engagement with legislators. Gov. Chris Bhang shared his involvement with the Indian Law Section and encouraged participation in their upcoming CLE event. The discussion concluded with acknowledgments of staff contributions.

Executive Session ([link](#))

The Board entered executive session at 3:45 p.m. to discuss an APR 2(b) request for reconsideration of an application for admission by motion; amicus briefing in *Perkins Coie LLP v. U.S. Department of Justice*; and the APEX Awards Recommendations. The Board returned to public session at 4:45 p.m. Gov. Fay moved to approve the APEX Awards Recommendations. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, President Anjilvel adjourned the meeting at 4:47 p.m. on Friday, May 2, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Terra Nevitt

Terra Nevitt

WSBA Executive Director & Secretary