

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

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING MINUTES

Seattle, WA

January 17-18, 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, January 17, 2025, at 9:04 a.m. Governors in attendance were:

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

Officers and Executive Staff in attendance included Executive Director Terra Nevitt, Chief Communications and Outreach Officer Sara Niegowski, Chief Regulatory Counsel Renata Garcia, Director of Advancement Kevin Plachy, Chief Equity & Justice Officer Diana Singleton, Chief Disciplinary Counsel Doug Ende, and General Counsel Laurie Powers.

Also present were Rex Nolte, Mark Fucile, Monte Jewell, Shelly Bynum, James E. Macpherson, Joe Gouge, Julianne Unite, Paris Eriksen, Szilvia Szilagyi, Catherine Schur, Betsylew Miale-Gix, Craig Shank, Jenny Durkan, Jeanne Marie Clavere, Nicole Chen, Brooke Amster, Christopher Bhang, Min Kang, Nancy Hawkins, Ailene Limric, William Trippett, Sharon Sakamoto, Brent Williams-Ruth, Peter Arkinson, Margeaux Green, Alec Stephens, Scott Semran, Raina Wagner, Brian Tollefson, Brooke Amster, and Miryam Gordon.

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

Brent Williams-Ruth highlighted the recent ratification of the 28th Amendment, marking a significant milestone for gender equality. He also emphasized the importance of clear communication regarding large-scale projects, such as the pilot test of entity regulation. No further public comments were made.

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

President Anjilvel announced that WSBA is currently accepting applications for four congressional district positions on the board, with a deadline of February 18, 2025.

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

Executive Director Terra Nevitt referred to her written report and invited questions. There were none.

Consent Calendar ([link](#))

Executive Director Nevitt introduced the consent calendar which included the approval of November 2024 minutes, Client Protection Board gift recommendations, and two presidential appointments. Gov. Kristina Larry moved to approve the consent calendar. Motion passed unanimously.

Update from the WSBA Legal Technology Task Force ([link](#))

Member Craig Shank presented an update from the WSBA Legal Technology Task Force. The Task Force conducted a member survey to assess the impact of emerging technologies on the legal profession, receiving a 5% response rate from 10,000 members. Chair Jenny Durkan highlighted the key findings, which were a lack of generative AI use among small and solo practitioners, with 75% not utilizing such tools. She also emphasized the need for diverse solutions and proposed further education and support for members. Chair Durkan mentioned that the Task Force is on track to meet the deadline established by the Board of Governors, with a comprehensive report forthcoming.

WSBA Committee on Professional Ethics ([link](#))

Chair Monte Jewell and Subcommittee Chair Mark Fucile presented the Committee on Professional Ethics' recommendations to propose amendments to RPC 1.16 and its comments. The amendments aim to align Washington's rules with the ABA model rule, focusing on the lawyer's duty inquire into the facts of each representation in order to avoid facilitating illegal or fraudulent activities, particularly money laundering. Gov. Jordan Couch moved to approve the recommendations to amend RPC 1.16. Motion passed unanimously. Gov. Nam Nguyen was not present for the vote.

Interview Governor At-Large Candidates ([link](#))

The Board convened to interview candidates for the vacant Governor At-Large position. Executive Director Nevitt outlined the process, emphasizing adherence to bylaws and ensuring a fair and transparent process. Six candidates presented their qualifications, highlighting diverse backgrounds and experiences. The Board discussed the significance of diversity, equity and inclusion in the current socio-political contexts and the need for strategic, inclusive actions. Voting took place by electronic secret ballot.

Selection and Swearing in of At-Large Governor ([link](#))

Christopher Bang was elected as the new At-Large Governor. Chief Justice Stephens administered the oath of office, welcoming him to the board. The Board expressed gratitude to the candidates and the DEI Council for their efforts in the selection process.

DEI Council Update ([link](#))

The DEI Council, represented by Co-Chairs Raina Wagner and Nam Nguyen, as well as Sharon Sakamoto, and Miryam Gordon, provided an update on the draft Equity and Justice Plan. The plan aims to strengthen the legal profession, advance a fair legal system, and deepen the Bar's commitment to equitable decision-making. The final plan will be presented at the March Board of Governors meeting.

Adjournment of Day One

There being no further business, President Anjilvel adjourned the meeting at 4:57 p.m. on Friday, January 17, 2025.

Day Two ([link](#))

President Anjilvel called day two of the Board meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

Executive Session ([link](#))

Executive Director Nevitt outlined the procedure for entering an Executive Session, scheduled to begin at 9:15 a.m., to discuss Governor involvement in discipline, as permitted by WSBA bylaws. The session concluded at 10:58 a.m., and the Board resumed the public session at that time.

Proposal to Adopt a Board Governance Committee ([link](#))

General Counsel Laurie Powers presented the proposal for establishing a Board Governance Committee as a first reading. The proposal included a draft charter outlining the committee's structure and responsibilities. The Board discussed the committee's composition, with suggestions to ensure continuity by including members from each governor class and considering the role of past and current presidents. The Board took public comment from Nancy Hawkins, who raised questions about the Board dedicating time to reviewing the work of sections and the advantages of incorporating section input. Brent Williams-Ruth spoke in support of the proposal, emphasizing the need for streamlined bylaws and regular reviews. The discussion concluded with a consensus to refine the proposal, incorporating feedback on composition and responsibilities, and to revisit it at a future Board meeting.

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

During the Governor Roundtable, Gov. Kevin Fay proposed that board members be provided with email addresses through the Bar Association's Exchange server to enhance cybersecurity. Executive Director Nevitt agreed to explore this with IT staff.

Proposed Comment on Seante Bill 5027 ([link](#))

Gov. Kari Petrasek reported on Senate Bill 5027, which offers student loan repayment incentives for prosecutors and public defenders in rural areas. After the Board's discussion, Gov. Fay moved to authorize drafting a letter to the legislature, highlighting how the bill aligns with issues identified by the STAR Committee and signing of the letter by President Anjilvel, STAR Committee Chair Kari Petrasek, and

Executive Director Nevitt. The motion passed with one abstention. Gov. Mary Rathbone was not present for the vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business, President Anjilvel adjourned the meeting at 12:19 p.m. on Saturday, January 18, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Terra Nevitt

Terra Nevitt
WSBA Executive Director & Secretary