

THURSTON COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.
hosted by John Kesler III and Jenna Norden at John Kesler's Office

Members Present: Marie Docter, Jerry Gray, Bill Pope, Michael Young, Wayne Graham, John Kesler III, Melissa Goldmann, and Jenna Norden

Members Absent: Jeffrey Carr, Joe Scuderi, Rosemary Fitzgerald, Brandon Koenig

Others Present: Heather Ligtenberg

1. **Call to order** 5:36 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes of November 15, 2025, Board Retreat Meeting** – Jerry moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Jenna. Melissa abstained since she was not present at the November meeting. The motion carried without objections.
3. **New Business**
 - 3.1 Guidelines of local courts for deciding how to communicate with litigants (John) – John said the communication with the Court can be difficult. The issue was raised at the pre-trial conference. A discussion took place. John will draft a letter to the Court.
 - 3.2 2026 Membership Form (Heather) – Heather sent the 2026 membership form to the board and asked if anyone had any changes. The board does not have any changes.
 - 3.3 2026 Bigelow Award Form (Heather) – Heather sent the 2026 Bigelow Award nomination form to the board and asked if anyone had any changes. The board does not have any changes to the form. Heather will reach out to the people who nominated people last year to see if they want to nominate the person again this year. Heather will look back at the minutes and check what the decision was about how many years back she should contact.
 - 3.4 BOCC Budget (Marie) – Marie talked to Judge Skinder again regarding the final budget which will be sent out on December 16. The County has decided to deal with any errors during the amendment process. It has been a bumpy ride with new information coming in daily. The County has \$1.5 million in new money, but has 300k in cuts. The 100k from the jury fund is still cut and is not being put back in. The other area where there is a serious deficiency is in security. The biggest issue is that family and juvenile court is in a dire situation. They are going to have to terminate people. There are 64 children that need attorneys, but they do not have the budget to do that. They will need to find independent funding to help with this. There are eight open positions at family and juvenile court that the county does not want them to fill. The Clerk's office is still in bad shape. They will have to start letting people go. Arthur West filed a lawsuit against the County, Court, Clerk's office. All judges have recused themselves from this lawsuit, so they are looking for a judge for this case.
 - 3.5 WSBA's Oath Review and Drafting Task Force (Marie) – The WSBA is looking into revising the old oath of attorney. They are creating a task force to review and make changes to it. If we have any suggested changes, they are looking for feedback. Marie will send it to Heather and Heather will send it to the members.
 - 3.6 Summer BBQ Venue and Date (Heather) – Tumwater Historical Park – Heather asked what venue we would like to use for the 2026 BBQ. The board said they liked Tumwater Historical Park and would like to have it there again. There is good parking and a playground

nearby. Heather will reserve Thursday, August 13, 2026, if it is available.

- 3.7 2025 Holiday Lunch Recap & 2026 Holiday Lunch Venue and Date (Heather) – The board said the holiday lunch went well and was well attended and the choir was great. Members donated \$562 to the choir. We could switch it up every year and have another choir next year.

4. **Old Business**

- 4.1 Update on Attorney General’s Office Involvement (Marie) – Marie contacted Kelly Wood at the Attorney General’s office who said he would like to be the Chair of the Real Estate, Land Use and Environmental Law section.
- 4.2 B&O tax and Retail tax on live presentations, advertising and IT Services (Heather) – Heather has researched this but has not found solid information on what the tax rate is. Jenna moved that until there is solid information to take action, we do not charge tax, seconded by Wayne. The motion carried without objections.

5. **Treasurer’s Report** (Brandon) – October 2025 Balance Sheet and November 2025 Financial Report – This was not discussed as Brandon was not present at the meeting. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

6. **Monthly Luncheon Update** (Jerry) – Jerry said Trevor Zandell will present at the January 30 CLE on Easements. Jerry also said he received information about a “Speak Up for Justice Washington” CLE where a federal judge and a WSBA person speaks on the threats to the judiciary, which we could possibly do in March or April. Melissa said Commissioner Rawnsley said he would like to do a CLE on unlawful detainers or attend a Land Use section meeting and share information at the meeting. Marie said Susan Pai sent information to her about a DEI CLE presented by Susan Coskey which was done recently in King County. The DEI section would like to have this CLE in Olympia too. Jerry will reach out to Susan Pai. Bill said the speakers for the recent CLEs have done a good job and the information is great.

7. **Committee Reports**

- 7.1 Bench/Bar (President) – No report.
- 7.2 CLE (Bill, Brandon, Wayne, Melissa, Jeffrey) – Jenna will talk to Sandra at Sound Legal Aid about how to proceed with the January 12 CLE since Stacy Hicks, who passed away recently, was helping with this half day CLE.
- 7.3 Rules Committee (Marie and Jerry) – Marie sent an email to Ingrid Zerpa, Jeffrey Carr, Bill Pope, Jennifer Johnson, and Patrick O’Connor, she will add Joe Jackson and Jerry Gray to the email too, regarding new rules proposals that are due on February 13. It doesn’t matter what area of practice the rule change is coming from. It needs to be acceptable to the entire bar even though its not your area of practice. The Court wants people from all areas to support the changes. We have a formulized committee that will first review the changes. Jeffrey Carr and Jennifer Johnson are going to draft a rule that will be distributed to the committee as a tentative rule. The smaller committee will put together a draft and then submit it the TCBA board to review first. If you have suggested rule changes we can try to get it drafted and submitted.
- 7.4 Social Events Committee (Brandon (Chair), Heather, Joe, Jenna, Jeffrey, Wayne, Jerry) – No report.
D&D Game Night (Mike DeWitt) – No report.
- 7.5 Newsletter & Marketing (Heather) – Need IN RE for January - Wayne volunteered to find someone. Heather will send Wayne the questions.
- 7.6 Judicial Evaluation Survey & Bylaws Committee (Michael, Wayne, Joe, John, Jenna, Chris Meserve) – No report.
- 7.7 Law Library (Michael and Marie) – No report.
- 7.8 Law Day Speech Contest (Marie, Melissa, Rosemary, Jeffrey) – The committee will start

discussing the topic. Possible topics: AI, ChatGPT.

- 7.9 New Courthouse (Marie) – No report.
- 7.10 Bigelow House & Community Connections (Marie) – Nate, who runs the HUB, said they need to start working on this again.
- 7.11 Annual Meeting & Dinner (Heather) – The event will be at Heritage Room. The Bigelow award winner will pick the music.

8. **Section Reports**

- 8.1 Family Law (Meredith Gerhart) - We did not have a November meeting because the 2nd Tuesday of the month fell on Veterans Day. Our December meeting will be our traditional potluck meeting, instead of the roundtable we usually have. I'm actually in the process of sending out a Survey Monkey to the family law section to confirm how many people are planning on attending.
- 8.2 Pro Bono (Jenna Norden) – Sound Legal Aid is going through a transition period right now because of Dr. Stacy Hicks death. They are still trying to figure out who will step into Stacy's role.
- 8.3 Young Lawyers (Devin Kohr & Peter Lindgren) – John shared that Devin told him they are having a meeting next week. Devin said she is aging out of being the young lawyer chair soon.
- 8.4 Criminal Law (Rosemary Fitzgerald & Jenna Norden) – Wayne said they have a Pre-trial services diversion symposium that is in the next week or two that we can send out to the members. Wayne will send the info to Heather.
- 8.5 Real Estate, Land Use, and Environmental Law (Kelly Wood) – The next Chair will be Kelly Wood from the Attorney General's office. Heather sent him the section chair information.
- 8.6 Diversity and Inclusion (Susan Pai) – I have a meeting with Chief Justice Debra Stephens on December 11, 2025, about hanging Justice Mary E. Fairhurst's portrait at the Temple of Justice. Susan sent a proposal about the Thurston County Bar Association Diversity Mentorship Program (DMP) Proposal. Jenna moved to approve, Wayne seconded. The motion carried without objections.

Marie asked Heather to send a note to the section Chairs and ask them to tell members to come to the TCBA events.

9. **Additions to agenda**

10. **Announcements**

- 10.1 Bill thanked Jenna and John for providing the food and John for providing the office space.

- 11. **Date/location of next meeting:** January 14, 2026, hosted by Wayne and Brandon at John's Office

- 12. **Adjourn** 7:04 p.m.