THURSTON COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.
hosted by Jenna Norden and John Kesler at John Kesler's Office

Members Present: Marie Docter, Jerry Gray, Jason Foust, John Kesler III, Melissa Goldmann, Bill Pope, Jenna Norden, Rosemary Fitzgerald, and Jeffrey Carr

Members Absent: Wayne Graham, Joe Scuderi, Brandon Koenig
Others Present: Heather Ligtenberg

1. **Call to order** 5:28 p.m.

2. **Approval of Minutes of May 13, 2026, Board Meeting –** Marie moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Melissa. The motion carried without objections.

3. **New Business**
   - 3.1 Holiday Giving Organization (Salvation Army, SafePlace, Family Education & Support Services) – Heather shared information about the Family Education & Support Services holiday giving program. After discussion, the board said we can offer all three of the options and members can choose which organization they would like to support.
   - 3.2 Credit Card Machine (Heather) – See #5 below.

4. **Old Business**
   - 4.1 Live Presentation Sales Tax Update (Jerry & Heather) – Jerry and Heather shared that the Department of Revenue sent the TCBA a couple of letters stating that we owe retail sales tax for the CLEs we offer. We applied for an exception with the Department of Revenue, but they denied our request for an exception. We need to pay the retails sales tax on the CLEs we offered dated back to October 1, 2025. The total Heather calculated that we owe the Department of Revenue is $1058 for seven past CLEs. We have added a sales tax line to all future CLEs so we will collect sales tax from the CLE attendees going forward. Heather will work with John to finalize this.
   - 4.2 BBQ Review (Heather) – Thanks to everyone that came. Same response that we usually get. Maybe we could try having the BBQ at the end of the board year in June.

5. **Treasurer's Report** (Brandon) – April, May, June, July, August 2026 Financial Reports – Jerry shared that Brandon is out on medical leave for a few months and has asked Jerry to appoint an interim Treasurer until he returns. A discussion took place. Jerry will reach out to Brandon and ask him to resign from the treasurer's duties for the remainder of his term so he can focus on his health, but he would continue on the board when he returns. John has volunteered to be the treasurer. The financial reports from April – September 2026 will be discussed at the October meeting.

   Credit card machine (Heather) – Heather shared that there was a $25 fee on the August bank statement that she didn't know about. She called Heritage Bank and was told it is for the credit card machine, so she then talked to the third-party credit card machine company. They said they implemented a new policy in July 2026, and sent an email to Brandon about it, that says we will be charged $25 per month for the months that we don't use the credit card machine. The company said we can put our status to "dormant" for the months we know we aren't going to use the credit card machine but would need to remove the "dormant" status a couple weeks before we think we will use it again. Heather will call and ask what the minimum amount is per month that we need to spend on

the machine to avoid the $25 monthly fee.

Accidental large payment for half day CLE (Heather) – Heather shared that a TCBA member accidentally entered 100 x $85 + tax = $9500.00 when registering for the upcoming October half day CLE, so Heather has refunded $9224.20 to the member. The board suggested we cap the quantity allowed to register for our events, so this doesn't happen again. Heather will ask Jill Carter, our IT person, to do that.

6. **Monthly Luncheon Update** (Jeffrey) – Indian Law in September 25, the October 23 CLE is Heather Burgess. November might be Commissioner Rawnsley and Kortokrax or Rue.

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Bench/Bar (President) – Jerry will reach out to Judge Skinder to set a date for the next meeting.

7.2 CLE (Bill, Brandon, Wayne, Melissa, Jeffrey, Alec) – Jeffrey shared that there will be a DEI half-day CLE on October 9.

7.3 Rules Committee (Jerry) – No report.

7.4 Social Events Committee (John (Chair), Heather, Joe, Brandon, Jenna, Jeffrey, Wayne, Jerry) John is thinking of a paint & sip event or a book club (possibly get a CLE credit for the book club).
D&D Game Night (Mike DeWitt) – The next D&D night is on October 8.

7.5 Newsletter & Marketing (Heather) – IN RE for November? Heather said the September Legal Brief was emailed on September 3. Advertisements and articles for the November Legal Brief are due on October 21. Marie said she will complete the IN RE for herself. Heather will send her the questions. Bill said he didn't receive the September Legal Brief. Heather said she will send it to him and will make sure he is on the email list.

7.6 Judicial Evaluation Survey & Bylaws Committee (Wayne, Joe, John, Jenna, Chris Meserve) - The committee will review the 2025 survey questions and recommend any changes, if needed. Heather will send the committee the survey to review which will be discussed at the October meeting. Heather will send the entire board the 2025 survey questions before the October meeting.

7.7 Law Library (Marie) – They've been trying to figure out how to use the resources they have, but there are limitations on what the money can be used for. There are currently three kiosks, with a second kiosk being added to family court. There have been discussions about having someone staff the kiosks to show pro se litigants how to use Westlaw, do research and find forms. Community Connections has talked about creating videos on how to fill out forms for pro se litigants to use. Sound Legal Aid has scripts to use for the videos and has the people to create the videos. The Law Library can pay for the creation of these videos. Making positive steps in connecting all these people. The videos would be online with a link on the law library resources website. Sound Legal Aid would also have links to the videos on their website too. Practitioners can use the videos too. Melissa said the WA Law Help website has links for resources like this too. Marie said the videos can help people who can't read.

7.8 Law Day Speech Contest (Marie, Melissa, Rosemary, Jeffrey) – This will be discussed at a later meeting.

7.9 New Courthouse (Marie) – No report.

7.10 Bigelow House & Community Connections (Marie) – See 7.7. above.

7.11 Annual Meeting & Dinner (Heather) – Venue for 2027 – The board liked the event at the Heritage Room this past May. The location and food were good change from the food. The appetizers were hidden. The parking was fine. The event was well attended. The board would like to have the annual meeting and dinner at the Heritage Room next year. Heather will contact the Heritage Room and find out availability in May 2027.

7.12 County Charter (Michael) – No report.

8. **Section Reports**

8.1 Family Law (Meredith Gerhart) – We had our monthly meeting over the noon hour today. It was widely attended by the section members, even though we were missing 2 of our 5 judicial officers and had a very light agenda. The meeting concluded after about 25 minutes or so, and I think folks were happy to have some of their lunch hour left to actually eat lunch or return emails. Sandy Smith let us know that she is retiring and will be OOO beginning 9/18, and her official retirement date is 11/1. We also learned that our beloved Yvonne Pier will be taking over Sandy's role in Court Administration. It was bittersweet to learn that Sandy just dropped a nuclear bomb on us (that she's retiring in 10 days), but the consolation prize is that we will be in good hands with Yvonne. We received an update from Linda Enlow and the Clerk's Office that they will be open to in-person services at FJC beginning 9/21. The Clerk's counter will be open all day at FJC and at Main Campus from 9 – 12 every day. We received an update from Commissioner Rue that a committee has been formed to work on an "internal policy" for the court staff related to dealing with threatening communication directed at court staff and threatening communication that otherwise occurs in the courtroom. Once the committee has had time to implement its "internal policy," it will seek feedback/input from the local bar and community members related to threatening communication(s) directed at non-court staff while in the courtroom. This was a follow-up on an issue addressed at our August meeting, in which we discussed the "Zoom bombs" that happened during one of the calendars, and also an attorney felt threatened by a litigant directly outside of the courtroom following a calendar, and this particular attorney wanted guidance on what to do in that scenario should they be in the unfortunate situation where it repeats itself. Commissioner Rawnsley renewed his request for attorneys to come prepared with fee affidavits whenever requesting an award of attorney's fees. The calendar constraints make it difficult to have an additional hearing on attorney's fees, so coming prepared to address the issue of fees at the original hearing is best practice and also the procedure preferred by the court. Lastly, I did a plug for our upcoming October meeting, which is also Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Our two Court Case Coordinators are scheduled to give a brief presentation on common mistakes attorneys make when preparing orders transferring to the Court Case Coordinator, in addition to Protection Orders and Restraining Orders. The goal of the presentation is to educate the family law bar on how to maintain a standard of excellence we all know and respect, but also to make the Court Case Coordinators' jobs easier. Jeffrey shared that there will be permanent pro-tems on the Ex-Parte calendars.

8.2 Pro Bono (Jenna Norden) – They had their volunteer appreciation picnic in August and the breakfast fundraiser in May.

8.3 Young Lawyers (Devin Kohr & Peter Lindgren) – Devin is aging out of the young lawyer section so we will need a replacement co-chair for her. Rosemary said she has some new attorneys joining her office. Heather will reach out to Devin and find out when she is aging out and will ask Peter if he wants to stay as the Chair or co-chair. Heather will send an email to the section members and TCBA to advertise the Chair or co-chair opening.

8.4 Criminal Law (Rosemary Fitzgerald, Jenna Norden, & Christopher Taylor) – No report.

8.5 Real Estate, Land Use, and Environmental Law (Kevin Hayes) – Kevin has organized a CLE for October 5, 12:00 p.m. at Mercato's and has requested board approval. Heather shared the details of the CLE and the board approved the CLE. Heather will let Kevin know of the board's approval.

8.6 Diversity and Inclusion (Susan Pai) – From June 24 Meeting:

- DEI CLE Expansion: TCBA to host a half-day DEI CLE on Sept 25 or another date in November with speakers on racial equity, LGBTQ issues, and perhaps Native American rights.
- Judicial Portraiture: Board of Judges reviewing judge portraits for welcome signs to

highlight court diversity

- Mentorship Program: Early stage; expanding to law students and non-local participants; additional focus on judicial path mentoring to keep bench diverse.
- Youth Mock Trial: Efforts to revive and coach diverse middle/high school teams; volunteers needed for year-round support and events.

9. **Additions to agenda**

9.1 Budget issues at the County – TCBA's willingness to support the courts proposal. The board will abstain from choosing a side but can talk to members about reaching out to the Thurston County Commissioners.

9.2 Oath of Attorney Committee – Jerry received an email from the WSBA Oath Task Force. The task force is interested in proposing a change to the current oath and are seeking feedback from WSBA members. Heather will forward the email to the members and send any feedback to the Oath Task Force.

9.3 For the next meeting, add a brief introduction of each other for our new board member.

9.4 Thank you to Jenna and John for providing the food, and John for providing the meeting space.

9.5 Marie encouraged everyone to go teach in a classroom on Constitution Day September 17.

10. **Announcements**

11. **Date/location of next meeting**: October 14, 2026, hosted by Wayne Graham & Jason Foust at John's Office

12. **Adjourn** 6:55 p.m.