MINUTES
RAINIER COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 21, 2026

1. Call to Order

Chair Jani Hitchen called the meeting to order at 8:04am. The meeting was conducted as a hybrid meeting, via Zoom and in-person.

Member	Representative	Present/Not Present
DuPont	Gordon Karg	Not Present
Fife	Joey Murphy	Not Present
Orting	Kim Agfalvi	Not Present
Pierce County	Jani Hitchen	Present
Pierce County	Kyle Schmidtke (alt)	Present
Puyallup	Eric Johnson	Present
Ruston	Bruce Hopkins	Not Present
Sumner	Jeff Steffens	Present
Tacoma*	Jeff Lueders	Present
University Place	Linda Seesz (alt)	Present

*Nonvoting member

Others in attendance:

PCTV	Megan Hutton
Pierce County	Bill Vetter
Pierce County	Jeff Cox

Attorneys:

Fife	Jennifer Combs
Puyallup	Joe Beck
Pierce County	Jennifer Loynd

2. Approval of Agenda

The meeting agenda was approved.

3. Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from November 19, 2025 were approved.

4. New Business

a. 2026 video production hours

The ILA requires the Board to vote on new production hours allocations each year, for the term of Jan-Dec 2026. This determines how much video production each jurisdiction receives in the calendar year. It is based on a formula of PCTV staffing and operations dollars paid in during the 2025 year. Megan Hutton shared the document that shows the breakdown of what members paid in, hours staff are available, a deduction for the meeting coverage included with membership, and a pie chart showing the new breakdown. Losing one staff member to a layoff on December 31, 2025 affected the

allocations the most this year. Members had no questions. It was motioned, seconded and approved.

b. 2025 Q4 year-end financial statement

The Board reviewed a year-end statement that is nearly final. Year-end close was not complete at the time of this meeting. Members looked at revenues and expenses, and use of fund balance. The Board looked at special revenue from video projects after changing the hourly rate, raising $113,000+. There were no proceeds from the sale of capital assets.

Jennifer Combs offered kudos to Megan and team for keeping the budget in check, limiting spending, and preserving fund balance during a difficult time.

c. Six-year RCC financial outlook

The Board reviewed an Excel spreadsheet that showed a six-year financial outlook for RCC. This included operations, capital and special video revenue. Numbers shown for 2026 and 2027 reflect the actual 2026-27 biennial budget. Megan Hutton explained certain lines, including fluctuations in capital spending depending on the year.

A second excel sheet shows the amount of money jurisdictions would need to pay into RCC over six years to cover expenses. Megan Hutton explained there is not enough fund balance to cover the operation past 2029.

Kyle Schmidtke asked about seeking new members and whether that could help. Megan responded that of the cities she has approached in recent years, it's hard for new cities to carve out enough money required for membership. Some cities may be interested in contracting (non-membership) for specific video work but it's difficult to add staffing to accommodate demand with occasional contracts as compared to full membership.

Eric Johnson of Puyallup added that the numbers were sobering news. He asked if there had been a decision by the board of which alternative model(s) people liked. There was a recount of what the Board had looked at recently, and the ask to know the six-year outlook which was discussed at this meeting.

Jeff Steffens of Sumner echoed the numbers were helpful in aiding future discussion. He spoke to the quality of video production and meeting coverage, mentioning that Sumner residents wanted more meetings covered so Sumner recently expanded their meeting coverage. He mentioned a potential interest in Bonney Lake. Jeff asked what it would take to add staff. Megan responded that it would take multiple small cities, or one larger city like Lakewood.

Megan emphasized that this is where Board Members are immensely helpful, in connecting her with other cities not yet served by RCC.

Jennifer Combs mentioned pitching our ability to meet accessibility requirements. Fife is interested in learning more about the Two Arms model and diversifying revenue streams.

5. Old Business

a. RCC Needs Assessment survey results

The survey was sent out three different times and a total of seven responses were received. Megan Hutton scrolled through the survey questions and results.

Jennifer Coombs mentioned that RCC – the Board – is very important to Fife. Chair Hitchen asked how Tacoma does their TV station.

Jeff Lueders with Tacoma answered that TV Tacoma is down three staff and there's a hiring freeze. He mentioned issues with Lightcurve. He had no answer to Jani's question about the idea of merging RCC/PCTV and TV Tacoma operations.

b. Cable Franchise audit update

Bill Vetter with Pierce County's Performance Audit Committee began by answering some questions that came out of the last meeting. One was if the contractor performing the Comcast cable audit would work on a contingency basis. The answer is no. Flat fee per jurisdiction. Second, is when would jurisdictions reimburse Pierce County for the audit work, of which Pierce County is paying the cost in full. An MOU document would contractually obligate participating cities to reimburse.

There was discussion about which cities were interested in participating. Sumner and Puyallup said yes. A hard yes or no is needed by the March meeting. City cost is $10,000. Pierce County's cost is $16,000. Linda Seesz of UP needs to take it back to the city for approval. The discount for the audit is only possible with four or more participants. Bill Vetter will work on a draft MOU agreement.

6. PCTV Update

a. Misc notes

Megan mentioned Pierce County has hired a new Communications Director who will fill the seat vacated by Libby Catalinich at the March meeting.

She also asked for emails from board members if someone new is taking their seat as city assignments change in the new year.

7. Public Comment

None.

8. Commissioner Comments

None.

9. Adjourned – at 9:02am

Next Meeting: March 18, 2026