MINUTES
RAINIER COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Wednesday, March 18, 2026

1. Call to Order

Chair Jani Hitchen called the meeting to order at 8:06am. 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	Present
Orting	Kim Agfalvi	Not Present
Pierce County	Jani Hitchen	Present
Pierce County	Maranatha Hay	Present
Puyallup	Eric Johnson	Present
Ruston	Bruce Hopkins	Not Present
Sumner	Jeff Steffens	Present
Tacoma*	Jeff Lueders	Present
University Place	Linda Seesz (alt)	Present
University Place	Alecia Cunningham	Present

*Nonvoting member

Others in attendance:

PCTV	Megan Hutton
Pierce County	Bill Vetter

Attorneys:

Fife	Jennifer Combs

2. Approval of Agenda

The meeting agenda was approved.

3. Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from January 21, 2026 were approved.

4. New Business

a. Welcome new board members

Chair Jani Hitchen announced new board members Maranatha Hay and Alecia Cunningham, Pierce County Communications Director and Councilmember from University Place, respectively. Maranatha Hay shared her history and experience before joining Pierce County. Alecia was unable to share introductions at this time.

5. Old Business

a. Cable franchise audit update – Bill Vetter/Megan Hutton

Megan Hutton introduced Bill Vetter with Pierce County's Performance Audit Committee to discuss the Cable Franchise Audit. Megan began with stating in today's

meeting that the goal is to confirm the final list of participants, discuss the timeline from the vendor, review a draft interagency agreement, and formally vote to join the audit.

Megan Hutton mentioned that Gordon Karg with DuPont indicated the city has declined participation in the audit as they are uncertain whether they can allocate necessary resources. Megan Hutton stated that Orting and Ruston councils did not approve the audit due to financial constraints as well. Pierce County confirmed yes and is leading the audit, through its Performance Audit Committee. Eric Johnson confirmed yes for Puyallup, stating the city manager authorized it. Megan Hutton confirmed by email that Fife is a yes with verbal confirmation from Jennifer Combs. Jeff Steffens with Sumner and Alecia Cunningham with University Place both verbally confirmed yes.

The vote confirms five RCC members will join the audit: Pierce County, Puyallup, University Place, Fife, and Sumner. And three will not: DuPont, Orting and Ruston.

The Board then discussed the timeline. Bill Vetter indicated the audit could likely be completed by the end of the year, contingent upon timely cooperation and data delivery from Comcast. At this time, they believe the timeline is achievable but will continue to keep everyone informed. Megan Hutton mentioned some cities will be in budget season and are anticipating making payment for the cost of the audit within this calendar year. They'll need to know this fall if that date is changing, and the contract would need to be amended.

Bill Vetter and a County prosecuting attorney developed the draft Interagency Agreement for the cities to review and offer revisions. The listed reimbursement date is Tuesday, December 1st, 2026, but subject to change per circumstances and report release. He stated the County is flexible on that. The draft Interagency Agreement was shared on screen at 10 minutes 39 seconds. Bill Vetter mentioned he does not know which jurisdictions would like to produce their own document, but the draft is a good baseline document. Megan Hutton confirmed the document was included in the meeting packet and scrolled through the screenshared draft Interagency Agreement. After reviewing with jurisdiction's legal teams, the Interagency Agreement would be ready for a DocuSign process from Pierce County. Jani Hitchen confirmed Megan Hutton and Bill Vetter are the point of contact to handle questions from the city's legal teams. They will email the newest version and include attorneys.

Jani Hitchen and Megan Hutton confirmed a vote to join the audit by the board. Jani Hitchen entertained the motion. Eric Johnson moved the motion, and Alecia Cunningham seconded the motion to approve joining the audit process in partnership with Pierce County. Jani Hitchen requested those in favor say aye, confirmed by Alecia Cunningham and Eric Johnson.

b. Financial reports – Megan Hutton

Megan shared the final 2025 year-end statement for RCC, highlighting $15,696 was used from the more than $800,000 in Fund Balance. The report shares the total revenue received by jurisdiction for matching Operations PEG. The total revenue generated from Video Services has been updated since the previous version and stands just shy of $133,000, representing the highest amount received in any year, in that line, to-date.

Includes rate change. Historically, the previous amount was $100 per hour for services, then increased to $130 for members and $180 for outside non-members in 2025. Now it is $150 for members and $200 for outside non-members as of 2026. The report shares the total revenue received by jurisdiction for Capital PEG and notes no sales of surplus equipment in 2025. 2026 may have surplus sales due to update of camera equipment.

Megan Hutton shared the 2026 first quarter statement for RCC as we begin receiving revenue from jurisdictions and video services. A notable expense in Repairs/Maintenance – IT is approximately $40,000 per year for web streaming, captioning, and 24-7 persistent channel stream through Invintus. This allows live web streaming from cities sent to the city's requested location. Invintus costs will likely increase an additional $7,000 - $9,000 to meet updated requirements from WCAG regulations. PCTV is testing and receiving quotes in preparation of new regulations. The new budget includes a $10,000 placeholder. [Note: At the time of this meeting, WCAG 2.1 rules had not yet been postponed, now required in 2027.]

c. RCC Structural Change

Megan Hutton reviewed previous discussions around RCC structural change and floated the idea of developing a committee to work outside of the RCC Meetings to increase productivity. September included talk about different models and ways other agencies funded PEG around the nation. November included a needs assessment, review of survey responses, and benefits of the audit. January's meeting shared a six-year financial outlook showing a trend of expenses outpacing revenues. Some of that work showed staff reductions were necessary, and one layoff was implemented on December 31, 2025.

March offered discussions around what we are doing to diversify revenue and meeting with other cities. Megan Hutton is preparing who and what materials with plans of meeting with City of Lakewood and others, to be determined. Any members with contact connections are welcome to share as we attempt to recruit additional cities. Maranatha Hay offered support and noted additional cities would temporarily increase revenue that would also see decline over time. Megan Hutton agreed and noted that with additional cities, we would need to scale up staffing with a possible part-time employee versus FTE. Eric Johnson asked about future staff layoffs based on trajectory, and Megan Hutton shared that there are no plans for 2026-27 layoffs. The new budget for 2026-27 was adjusted to prevent more layoffs. But a new plan for RCC funding must be ready by spring 2027 for 2028-29 budget preparation.

Megan Hutton requested advice from members about ideas on what to look at next. She also suggested that some of the most successful models were owned by one jurisdiction. Megan Hutton reached out to multiple PEG stations across the nation including Austin, TX, Minnesota, Seattle and Kent. She discussed the two-arms model implemented by the City of Austin, and shared that essential functions were still tied to declining revenue.

Jani Hitchen stated she liked the idea of a sub-committee to continue with conversations with actual financial data. Offering that based on the survey, meeting coverage for government transparency is at RCC's and its member's core. She requested

confirmation of the number for a quorum as five. Megan Hutton and Jennifer Combs confirmed five. As Jennifer Combs is not member of the RCC, she can be on the committee without interfering with quorum. Jani Hitchen requested that Megan Hutton reach out to the cities and poll for volunteers to begin coordinating a schedule to discuss different models.

Jani Hitchen mentioned the audit will be beneficial in planning as we move forward and will help prepare for the 2028-29 budget. Megan Hutton agreed and acknowledged the audit numbers may be closer to end of year. She also suggested narrowing into two options to discuss. Megan Hutton shared the 2026 Q1 – pending financial report and suggested not tying the two streams of membership dues and operation PEG fees to cable television. But jurisdictions continue to trigger the capital PEG revenue to pay for the equipment. Eric Johnson confirmed interest in joining the sub-committee for RCC Structural Change. The RCC Steering Committee will be comprised of: Jani Hitchen, Maranatha Hay, Eric Johnson, Linda Seesz, Jennifer Combs and Megan Hutton.

6. PCTV Update

a. New WCAG 2.1 regulations coming April 24

Megan Hutton asked who was familiar with WCAG 2.1, with a couple of hands shown. WCAG affects videos that are web-related to increase accessibility for audiences. It does not affect Cable TV or captioning. WCAG 2.1 will affect videos on the web and one-off videos such as live streaming council meetings and channel content for the web. PCTV is looking at an AI solution to add audio descriptions to council meeting for the web. This is the most cost-effective option. One-off videos created at PCTV will likely be covered by Adobe Premier, as staff are already adding captions for videos.

After researching solutions, PCTV is hopeful Invintus will be a solution, as a current vendor for simple integration into existing web streaming workflows. Other companies are quoting over $10,000 and require additional new hardware/software. Current deadline is April 24th. PCTV is actively testing with Invintus, though still in beta stage. Update planned for the next meeting. [See note in minutes under 5b regarding change in deadline.)

b. Explore new streaming app

Megan Hutton stated two budget seasons ago, PCTV considered the cost of a streaming app that would allow PCTV to be viewed when using an Amazon Fire Stick or similar option. However, it was too costly and time consuming to be beneficial. Since then, costs have come down. Megan Hutton is working with Invintus on a 3-year no-cost trial. Invintus recommends Amazon Fire Stick citing biggest numbers and audience with its connection to Amazon and the Pacific Northwest. More to come as more details emerge around cost, staff, managing another platform. Eric Johnson agreed it makes sense to explore as it currently serves as a new live TV platform offering local news and games. Jani Hitchen asked about requirement of being an Amazon Prime member. Megan Hutton stated she would confirm but believes you don't need to be a member of Amazon to purchase from Amazon.

7. Public Comment

None.

8. Commissioner Comments

Jeff Lueders mentioned in the City of Fort Collins, CO, their city attorney is claiming undue burden given the staff and budget constraints for the WCAG 2.1 regulation deadline as a similarly sized group of over 200,000. He stated this was shared at the NATOA Video Production Committee last Wednesday. Maranatha Hay reiterated the WCAG 2.1 deadline is in just over a month. Megan Hutton also offered additional information on the struggle vendors are experiencing with the time and technology.

Jani Hitchen announced Jeff Cox's retirement from Pierce County council last month. She is working on securing an alternate for Pierce County.

9. Adjourned – at 8:52am

Next Meeting: May 20, 2026