MINUTES
RAINIER COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Wednesday, May 20, 2026

1. Call to Order

Chair Jani Hitchen called the meeting to order at 8:05am. The meeting was conducted as a hybrid meeting, via Zoom and in-person.

Member	Representative	Present/Not Present
DuPont	Gordon Karg	Not Present
Fife	Sean Murphy (alt)	Present
Orting	Mark Bethune	Not Present
Pierce County	Jani Hitchen	Present
Pierce County	Maranatha Hay	Present
Puyallup	Eric Johnson	Present
Ruston	Naomi Wilson	Present
Sumner	Jeff Steffens	Not Present
Tacoma*	Jeff Lueders	Not 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
Pierce County	Jennifer Loynd
University Place	Matt Kaser

2. Approval of Agenda

The meeting agenda was approved.

3. Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from March 18, 2026 were approved.

4. Old Business

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

Megan Hutton provided an update about the Cable Franchise Audit. The Interagency Agreement was delivered to the RCC attorneys for review. Megan stated that Pierce County will front the audit costs with each city's reimbursement. Pierce County is using a template of theirs that is being reviewed by the city attorneys. Megan mentioned questions from Joe Beck with Puyallup and Jennifer Combs with Fife about the contract's similarity to the existing ILA contract language. Stated concerns include the formality of the contract with unnecessary language triggers. Megan Hutton reached out to the initial reviewer of the contract, Kate Blinn of Pierce County and Bill Vetter

with Pierce County's Performance Audit Committee. It was suggested that with existing ILA and the approval vote, each city may only require a purchase order to reimburse Pierce County and the RCC could invoice each city. Megan has a meeting with Pierce County's procurement department to discuss the details of simply invoicing for each city's reimbursement. Updates after discussion with Bill Vetter to follow.

Bill Vetter stated that they are still working on the letter to Comcast. Bill mentioned the timeline is contingent on cooperation from Comcast's data delivery, and the board will be updated once established. Megan Hutton shared that Nina Polkinghorn, RCC's admin assistant, is gathering and organizing data and information from previous years to deliver to the vendor. Megan confirmed no outstanding questions from the committee. Jani Hitchen summarized that the goal of the contract was to simplify, not require council vote, and lessen hours required by legal review, essentially bill for services.

b. Financial reports – Megan Hutton

Megan Hutton confirmed the financial reports are available in the meeting packet and reminded that we are within the first year of the current biennial, 2026 Quarter 1 financial report is finalized and reviewable. The general summary for 2026 Q1 fund level, revenues less expenditures only required about $10,000 into the fund balance with some outstanding transactions. Megan reminded that last biennial, 2024-25, we were down 8-12% across most jurisdictions. As of now, the new trend is down only 2%. With the 2025 layoff and slowing decline of revenue, the numbers are beginning to align with expenditures.

With Pierce County's recent payment, RCC finances are positive $114,000. Megan clarified that DuPont and Puyallup's PEG numbers will be updated with the recent receipt of Comcast's quarterly revenue. Megan pointed out the Expenditure Account Activity section, which shares the largest expenditure items for Operations and Capital. Capital Equipment does not have any expenses as purchases fell below the required threshold of $10,000. The purchases for upgrading cameras and council chambers are found in the minor equipment spend category. The General Government Revenue – Video Services is at $42,000, on pace for the budgeted $130,000 in revenue.

Naomi Wilson with Ruston asked clarifying questions about Q2's net surplus and pay cycle. Megan Hutton confirmed it is primarily due to the timing of revenue flows. Revenue is received in large quarterly deposits, while expenditures occur throughout the year. As a result, interim financial reports reflect a temporary surplus that does not fully account for planned purchases, expenses, and salaries & benefits (two-week cycle).

c. RCC Steering Committee

Megan Hutton explained RCC's funding source. There is a decline in cable television viewership (cable franchise fee revenue), causing a concerning long-term trend that is impacting the financial health of RCC. The goal of the committee is to evaluate the funding of RCC to ensure services provided to the cities and county are not in jeopardy. Megan provided an update on funding options and shared that feedback is being gathered from board members to identify the most viable path forward.

One popular option is editing the existing ILA and amending the operations funding source. Ideas include tying it to jurisdiction populations or video production hours. Megan discussed the pros and cons, keeping in mind routine anticipated biennial budget cost increases like COLAs, medical benefits and insurance. Another option is contracting with a jurisdiction. Megan further described concerns with contracting, including thresholds and limitations. Megan asked to open these options for discussion.

Jennifer Combs stated that she appreciates RCC as it gives medium to small cities a voice at the table. She leans towards amending the ILA and discussed allocations methods, including population-based formulas and other jurisdiction-related factors. Jani Hitchen expressed the need to figure out how to subsidize the work as required to maintain services. Maranatha Hay asked about increased costs over time, causing issues with cities remaining as members.

Discussions included the value jurisdictions received from participation and whether different levels of membership or service were an option. It was highlighted that the benefits of shared services include collaboration and providing access to services that some jurisdictions may not otherwise be able to support independently.

Members discussed upcoming accessibility requirements, including audio description services beginning in 2027, and the importance of maintaining accessible and transparent public meetings. Discussion highlighted the value of PCTV services for emergency communications, public safety, and reaching residents with access and functional needs.

Members continued discussing long-term funding options, including potential amendments to the Interlocal Agreement and the possibility of contracting with Pierce County. Concerns were raised about declining franchise revenue, increasing operating costs and the sustainability of current services. Participants emphasized the importance of maintaining meeting coverage and video production that jurisdictions rely upon. Members discussed whether contracting or organizational changes could result in cost savings, including potential reductions in insurance and administrative expenses. It was noted that any future model would still require sufficient funding to maintain current staffing and service levels.

Discussion continued regarding the potential benefits and challenges of contracting with Pierce County, including possible cost savings, increased stability, and long-term service protection. Concerns were raised about maintaining local control, autonomy and representation if services were absorbed into a larger county structure. Members noted the contract language and government provisions could help preserve jurisdiction input and oversight. Discussion included the need to evaluate and compare the financial impacts of the current ILA model versus a potential contracting model.

5. PCTV Update

a. WCAG 2.1 regulations delayed to April 2027

Megan Hutton shared the federal deadlines have been extended to April 2027 for larger jurisdictions and smaller jurisdictions by April 2028. PCTV plans to implement audio descriptions and services in accordance with the applicable deadlines. A budget

placeholder of $10,000 has already been included to cover anticipated costs. Current estimates for service remain within budget. PCTV is working with an existing vendor and exploring a solution that integrates with current workflows and equipment.

6. **Public Comment**
   None.

7. **Commissioner Comments**
   None.

8. **Adjourned** – at 9:11am

*Voting Item

Next Meeting: June 17, 2026