



## Board of Governors Meeting Recap

July 18, 2025

A summary prepared by the WSBA of the Board of Governors (Board) meeting held July 18, 2025, in Walla Walla, WA. The agenda, materials, and video recording from this Board meeting are posted online. The next regular meeting is Sept. 26-27, 2025, in Seattle. The Board is the WSBA's governing body charged with determining general policies of the WSBA and approving its annual budget. To subscribe to the Board Meeting Notification list, email [barleaders@wsba.org](mailto:barleaders@wsba.org).

### TOP TAKEAWAYS

- **Incoming Treasurer.** Congratulations to [Governor Nam Nguyen](#), whom the Board elected as the WSBA's next Treasurer for FY26.
- **Expanding the License Fee Exemption Based on Financial Need.** The Board discussed a proposal that will expand the current license-fee hardship exemption in three ways: (1) increase the number of times a member is eligible for the hardship exemption from two to three; (2) raise the eligibility threshold from 200% of the federal poverty level to 270% of the federal poverty level; and (3) change the name from "Hardship Exemption" to "License Fee and Assessment Exemption Based on Financial Need." The Board expects to vote on this proposal in September. ([See page 197.](#))

### OTHER BUSINESS

**Local Hero.** The WSBA recognized retired prosecutor [James Nagel as a Local Hero](#), an honor bestowed by the WSBA President in partnership with county bar associations to recognize colleagues who make noteworthy contributions to their communities. James was nominated by

the Walla Walla County Bar Association for his almost four decades of service to the prosecutor's office as well as his longtime volunteerism with the local Kiwanis Club and Walla Walla County Fire District 4.

**Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and License Fee Policy.** The Board of Governors discussed the first draft of next fiscal year's budget, which is built on a \$10 increase in the active-attorney license fee (the first increase since 2020) to maintain regulatory programs and services. The Board also approved a [policy and process they will use now and in the future for setting the annual license fee](#): A market factor (COLA) will be considered each year to ensure the license fee is keeping track with the changing value of the dollar; then the Board will adjust the fee, depending on anticipated changes in revenues, expenses, reserve funds, and program needs. (See page 151.)

**Bylaw Amendment to Young Lawyer Title and Definition.** The Board supported a recommendation from the Washington Young Lawyer Committee (WYLC) that would change the WSBA Bylaws in two ways: The term "young lawyer" would change to "new member," and a "new member" would include any member within their first 10 years of licensure in Washington state. The current definition encompasses only the lawyer license type with an eligibility cap of 36 years of age or five years of practice in Washington. The WYLC's recommendations are the result of years of research, surveying, and discussion about how to expand the committee's eligibility parameters to include all members who might most benefit from its programs and services. The proposal will now go to the Court for consideration. ([See page 380.](#))

**Policy Change to Allow Sections to Purchase Alcohol.** The Board approved a change to the WSBA fiscal policy to allow sections to use section funds to purchase alcohol at their events. The recommendation came from the WSBA's Member Engagement Council, which was responding to considerable feedback and requests from sections. ([See page 216.](#))

**Revised Legislative Policy and Procedures.** The Board considered a recommendation to amend WSBA's policies regarding legislative activities to align with evolving interpretations of relevant rules and caselaw. The recommendation, from the Board of Governors Legislative Committee, consolidates current legislative policies and distinguishes WSBA legislative activity from law-improvement, when WSBA members respond to lawmakers on technical aspects of proposed bills. The Board expects to take action on the proposal in September. ([See page 570.](#))

**The Board also:**

- Held a moment of silence to honor and remember [Retired Washington Supreme Court Justice Charles K. Wiggins](#).
- Held a strategic planning retreat the day prior to the business meeting.
- Approved a charter for an Oath Review and Drafting Task Force, which is expected to begin work in FY26. In the wake of this year's local [Law Day \(May 1\) ceremonies around the state at which hundreds of lawyers gathered to retake the Oath of Attorney](#), President Sunitha Anjilvel recommended that the WSBA initiate a project to update and reinvigorate the professional oaths prescribed by Admission and Practice Rule 5. We are now recruiting interested members for the task force; [applications are due Friday, Aug. 8](#).
- Recommended a schedule for application fees and annual fees for the Entity Regulation Pilot Project, to go to the Washington Supreme Court for consideration. [More about the Entity Regulation Pilot Program](#). ([See page 203](#).)