

**WCN Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, March 6, 2026 (9:30 am to 3:30 pm)
Washington Center for Nursing Office
Minutes**

Attending: Shayla Holcomb (Seattle & King County/ Public Health Rep-), Steven Simpkins (Highline College/CNEWS Rep), Michelle James (Peace Health/NWONL rep), Edna Cortez (Seattle Children's Hospital/WSNA Rep), Christina Finch(Seattle Children's Hospital/NWONL Rep), Melissa Hutchinson (VA/ARNP rep), David Keepnews (WSNA/WSNA Rep), Christina Nyirati (Retired, Heritage University/At Large Rep), Wendy Williams-Gilbert (At-Large Rep)(left at 12pm and moved online)

Excused: Antwinett O. Lee (Seattle Pacific U/Multicultural Nurse Association Rep), Jane Hopkins (SEIU 1199NW rep), Lens Hristova (Seattle Colleges/At-Large Rep), Trisha Hopkins (SEIU 1199NW Rep), Tiffanie Rampley (WSU/CNEWS Rep), Lucy Merry (WCN Clinical Placement Associate)

Staff: Sofia Aragon, Theresa Berry, Brenda Little, Fawzi Belal, Patricia Mouton

Guest: Alison Bradywood, WABON Executive Director

Topics	Discussion	Action Needed
Call to order	Shayla Holcomb, WCN Vice President, called the Washington Center for Nursing Board of Directors Meeting to order at 9:31 am. Ms. Holcomb began by welcoming members and staff to the meeting.	
Consent Agenda	Ms. Holcomb next asked if there were any changes or concerns with the Consent Agenda. Christina Nyirati makes a motion to have WCN Board President Antwinett O. Lee in attendance for the discussion on the DOH RFP. The motion included staff scheduling a meeting on the DOH RFP in the next week. Sofia asked for minor changes to December 12, 2025, WCN Board of Directors Minutes. Staff to work scheduling an RFP Meeting.	Christina Nyirati moved, Wendy Williams-Gilbert seconded the motion to have the WCN Board Members hold a separate meeting on the DOH RFP to be scheduled by WCN Staff. Unanimous approval.

		Christina Nyirati moved, Wendy Williams-Gilbert seconded the motion to have the WCN Board Members hold a separate meeting on the DOH RFP to be scheduled by WCN Staff. Unanimous approval. Wendy Williams-Gilbert moved Melissa Hutchinson to second the motion to approve the Consent Agenda with minor changes to December 12, 2025, WCN Board Meeting Minutes. Unanimous approval
WCN Bylaws Change RFP Process	WCN Executive Director, Sofia Aragon, began with a PowerPoint presentation on current and future WCN work. She asked the question, ‘what do you want the center to be remembered for?’ Wendy Williams Gilbert - How important it is to have a workforce advocate that is not tied to WABON. This is why WCN is so important, you need that separate entity. Melissa Hutchinson – WCN is known for advocating for nurses and more people and more diverse people to become nurses and get advanced degrees. Also not burning everyone out.	

	Edna Cortez – She echoed Melissa, she is going through some racism at her workplace. She spoke about nurses not getting parity. We want nurses to start and grow, however their path they want to grow in nursing. There followed a short discussion about marginalizing internationally educated nurses. It is similar to graduates transitioning to practice. Nurses’ education cannot just be computer-based learning, we must connect. Steven Simpkins sees WCN as the hub in this state. His needs in nursing education are very different than a nurse on the floor. Unions are not involved in nursing education; WCN is a hub with many spokes of nursing. WCN will be remembered as being the mind of nursing. We have dirt under our fingernails, we decide what needs to be fixed, we go right in there and do it. Christina Nyirati feels we have been the heart of Washington nursing and now we need to be the head. Noted working with the diverse students at Heritage and how she worked to protect them. And that is the way we have been working and now we want to be the head – defining the problems, fixing the problems. We want us to be known as the definers of the problems, to be able to articulate the problems and leader of our stakeholders, labor needs to be involved, CNEWS needs to be involved about how our nursing students are educated, we don’t want diverse nurses to be trained like white nurses, we want to create spaces so the diverse nurse can become who they are and honoring their heritage. Antwinett and Sofia met with Alison on January 16th to connect. Alison expressed interest in giving WABON a non-voting seat on the WCN Board. Sofia informed her that we would have to speak to the WCN Board about it. Sofia spoke to our attorney and our lawyer noted this might be perceived as favoritism and giving them a seat on the board could get us disqualified by the RFP process. Discussion followed on how WABON might be involved with the WCN Board; we still want her on the agenda regularly. Sofia noted that the RFP is judged by the outside evaluators. It has been recommended not to explore adding WABON until after the results of the REFP.	The Board accepted the attorney’s advice to revisit adding WABON to the WCN Board of Directors after the RFP process is completed.
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	Noted lack of trust. Having them might be a sign of a more collaborative relationship between WCN & WABON, maybe the attorneys can find a way to structure this to be workable. Michelle and David agree with this opportunity. We should not be at odds all the time, it is an olive branch. Fawzi noted how much Alison and WABON have been part of WCN's work as we have invited them to participate in various initiatives. Maybe revisiting this discussion after RFP has been decided by the end of April 2026. In a possible future discussion, what kind of firewall and protection do we need to feel safe. Possible additions to our next WABON Contract. Sofia next walked the members through possible future work for WCN. They included: • Strengthen Nurse Practitioner Clinical Placements • Promoting Nursing Education as a Career • Expanding Diverse Nurse Faculty Retention • Continue statewide convenings to advance Clinical Placement Initiative Statewide Goals • Outreach to K-12 to Promote Nursing as a Career • Increasing Males in Nursing • Addressing Burnout to Increase Nursing Retention As well as other problems WCN can address, project timelines and the shifting nursing landscape. She next walked the members through the RFP process.	
WCN 2023 Audit Presentation	Theresa introduced Horace C. Francis, CPA, MBA, our auditor, and he introduced his staff member Chris as they both walked members through our Audit for 2023. Horace noted that he used to present in person, how long he has worked with WCN and how much he appreciates our work. The audit shows management responsibility for WCN to reach out to Horace to report on the audit. Chris began walking the group through the audit, the balance sheet, and the income statement. They noted we were in a strong financial position. They also noted a change in 2022 on requirements of the audit. They reported WCN's solvency and liquidity, then profitability and how many months of operational funds WCN has available. Chris next walked through the required communications. They again noted the excellent relationship they have with WCN. He reported no fraud was found.	Shayla Holcomb moved Wendy Williams-Gilbert to second the motion to approve the WCN 2023 Audit. Unanimous approval.

	Next was Key Accounting Observations & Recommendations and they noted the adjustments made. They spoke about changes that would improve the process and noted the crosswalk between financial years dealing with cash flows of grant payments. Mr. Francis' company has been associated with WCN for years and doing the work on a timely basis is important. They suggested doing the 2024/2025 audit together would be the most efficient way and fit the audit into the accounting schedule. Any other questions? No. Horace thanked Sofia and especially Theresa for our working relationship.	
Carter Development Group Final Report	Dr. Carter began with the five points they were working on: 1. Strategic Alignment: Co-author a Collaboration Plan and Unified Strategic Plan that includes a vision statement to define purpose, authority, deliverables, and metrics for success. 2. Role Clarity: Develop a Roles and Responsibilities Matrix, integrated into all contracts and project charters, to eliminate duplication and confusion. 3. Communication Systems: Institutionalize structured communication protocols and feedback loops through shared digital platforms. 4. Capacity Strengthening: Implement standardized project management tools, workload tracking systems, and operating procedures to enhance WCN's operational reliability. 5. Trust Building: Launch joint workshops, behavioral agreements, and feedback mechanisms to restore psychological safety and rebuild confidence. The best part of the process is that all three groups have a shared purpose and how they can work as a triad. He noted the conflict maps from the large in-person meeting. WABON and DOH are close allies. He walked through all three versions of the maps. Discussion followed. Dr. Carter noted the lack of clarity when developing contracts and the ambiguity and noted the differences and power imbalance. Their goal was to clarify the misperceptions and have an intentional pathway solution. Each organization has a specific role in creating and supporting a nursing workforce. They felt successful in capturing that information. They wanted us to capitalize on the overlap of work and desires. He noted the contract in process but first opened the floor for questions. WABON has not reached out to present Carter's work to their members. Questions. Timeliness, accuracy,	

	time management for new contract/RFP process. It would be great if all three sat down and created an agreed definition. WCN has met in good faith. There is an upside to the RFP because it must define certain things and what we are responding to with the work. Is there congruence between WABON and WCN's output? Discussion about having WCN and WABON on the same wavelength. WABON, are they even interested in repairing our relationship? Dr. Carter's belief is that WABON is not interested in repairing our relationship, they want to figure out how to make WCN do things. And this is where the RFP comes in and can clarify the work and help WCN move forward. WABON was not interested in the long-term plan to have a unified vision and wanted the RFP process. Discussion. Dr Carter noted that the RFP has challenges that might be hard for us. Discussion about the RFP and attachments. Suggested we need to move forward as if WABON is working in good faith. Noted this is complicated work and not business is usual. The legislature is asking for more accountability from state agencies. We cannot just track the data; we need metrics to show it meets our strategic goals. Is this a procurement issue for DOH? Dr. Carter spoke about the positive aspects of the RFP. Discussion on other organizations that are applying for the RFP. Members thanked Dr. Carter and the Carter Development Group for their hard work and support in the RFP process.	
WABON Presentation	Alison Bradywood, WABON Executive Director, presented on WABON current work. She began with strategic planning. Revised in July. Much broader than in the past. WABON looks to focus on their partnerships, be nimble and be open to change. At the center there is workforce development to include CNAs and other health care professions. They have updated their vision and mission statement. Their new dashboard launches next week. And the goal is all licenses processed in two weeks. Discussion on nurses getting back into the workforce after challenges with addiction. She spoke to the revisions of the rules and the work done so far and moving forward. WABON is hoping to finish the last one in May and be ratified by the end of the year. Discussed DEI questions. Also, structural racism as to who gets the assistance needed to learn the skills to get jobs. She noted at the bottom of most WABON website pages is a link to a survey to give feedback. The new licensing format has also been launched today. For public access to HELMS information, a student could put in a data request to WABON. Notices have been successful during the transition to HELMS and not too much delay for licensure. She also spoke about the budget updates. Discussion about budget and where are we	

	going with health professions licensure in Washington. CHWs (Community Health Workers) are not licensed in Washington State; maybe they can be an example of self-regulation. Alison spoke to the different home health care aides. Discussion about complications of the workforce, both employees and employers. DOH is looking at over two hundred layoffs. Some projections are over ten rounds of layoffs. DOH has been very dependent on Federal Funding, it was not sustainable. The Governor can veto line items, and we will see what he chooses to do. Rules in Progress Timeline 2026. Discussion about the rule changes. The Legislature is wrapping up on Thursday. Two requests for bills, HB 2339 passed yesterday. Another one did not pass, opposition to language on nurse liability. Discussion on data availability including a new data dashboard on the WABON website coming out next week. Alison noted the dashboard is done in house. Will there be tutorials for the new dashboards? Alison noted the website is intuitive, but that may change as the refunds begin. Discussion about refunds from not being able to have the license processed in two weeks. There is a ticker to show where your license is in process. They are working on modernizing the process. More to come. Discussion about nursing workforce dashboard and how to use it. Noted the trouble is getting to the correct one and working on better names and some help on the website.	
Next Meeting	The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm. Next WCN Board of Directors Meeting is June 12th from 9:30 pm to 3:30 pm.	

Submitted by: Frank Kohel

Approved: Sofia Aragon