



WASHINGTON'S LOTTERY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

June 11, 2026

Lottery HQ – Olympia, WA/Microsoft Teams

Judith Giniger, Commissioner, Chair
Schuyler Hoss, Commissioner
Eileen Sullivan, Commissioner
Rudy Mendoza, Commissioner

Lottery Staff Attendees:

Brian Bennett, Director
Cassi Villegas, Deputy Director
Kristi Weeks, Director of Legal Services
Todd Steben, Director of Finance
Jonathan Avermann, Director of IS
Randy Warick, Director of Sales & Marketing
Nikki Holien, Management Analyst
Christopher Rhodes, IT Customer Support
Cody LaCourse, Procurement/Supply Sp.
Shannon Miller, Customer Service Specialist
Stuart Woods, RSM
Jenna Johnson, Procurement Manager
Brian Minks, Corporate Accounts Manager
Corey Emery, Infra. & Support Supervisor
Scott Gatterman, Assistant RSM
Renee Smith, Fiscal Analyst
Ernesto Ramos, Customer Service Specialist
Razzaleen Bantilan, District Sales Representative
Jenny Whiteside, Corporate Accounts Manager
Stacy Sund, Merchandising Coordinator
Alex Satterlund, Internal Auditor
Chelsey Sok, Human Resource Consultant
Lance Anderson, Assistant Director of Sales
Cheryl Earsley, Scratch & Promotions Coordinator

Patti Swihart, Communications Consultant
Amit Suri, SQL Database Administrator
Tiffany Pringle, Leg. Service Coordinator
Anquone Conyer, Support Services Manager
Derek Poppe, Director of Security and Licensing
Hilary Elkins, Budget Manager
Sharlene Rosenburg, Customer Service Specialist 2
Gift Ezeigbo, Fiscal Analyst
Jessica Rosewell, Marketing Operations Manager
David Seely, Warehouse Operator 2
Conner Warick, Fiscal Analyst
Karee Polluck, Customer Service Specialist 2
Meredith Wooten, Regional Sales Manager
Dan Gisel, Regional Sales Manager
Eric Daniels, District Sales Representative
Linda Su'a, Graphic Designer Senior
Becky Feigner, Customer Service Specialist 2
Tasha Shipman, Warehouse Operator 4
Paulette Miller, Sec. Licensing Admin. Assist.
Carissa Glassburn, IT Business Analyst
Gaylene Gray, Instant Product Manager
Kimberley Ficek, Customer Service Specialist
Kathi Patnode, Assistant Director of Marketing
Bariah Rice, Executive Assistant

Other Attendees

Eric Allen, Assistant Attorney General
Joseph Lapinski, Brightstar
Dan Oliver, WSAC
Shawn Chase (member of the public)
Dan Miller, Curator
Xiamara Garza-Urbietta, Curator
Rebecca George, WIGA
Joe Lapinski, Brightstar

Rosina DePoe, WIGA
Linda Edwards, WIGA
Becky Bogard, Brightstar
Ernie Perez, Brightstar
Kristie Christensen, VML
Alisa Bartholomew, VML
Scooter Churchill, VML
Ebenezer Tan, VML
Emily Libby, VML
Ron Miguel, Scientific Games

Jay (member of the public)
Aubrey Seffernick, Kalispel Tribe

Anela Summers, Miller Nash

Call to Order:

9:03 a.m. Chair Giniger called the June 11, 2026, Lottery Commission meeting to order. Commissioners Schuyler Hoss, Rudy Mendoza, and Eileen Sullivan were present.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Chair Giniger entertained a motion to approve the April 9, 2026, Commission meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Hoss moved to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Sullivan seconded the motion. Hearing no discussion or objections, the motion passed unanimously.

Director's Update:

Director Bennett welcomed **Bariah Rice** as the Lottery's new Executive Assistant and highlighted her previous experience with the State Legislature, and her post-secondary education. He also shared that Powerball is expanding into the United Kingdom, describing it as a significant milestone for the game's continued growth.

Director Bennett discussed the state's anticipated budget shortfall and noted that agencies have been asked to identify opportunities to increase revenue and reduce costs. He emphasized the Lottery's continued focus on maximizing beneficiary contributions while operating efficiently.

Commissioners discussed the Powerball expansion, including its impact on the game, its relationship with the UK's existing lottery offerings, and whether the expansion would affect jackpot odds. Staff explained that the odds and jackpot structure will remain unchanged.

Deputy Director's Update:

Deputy Director Villegas informed the Commission that Leah White-Noreen, former Director of Human Resources and Support Services, has departed the agency. Recruitment for the position is underway, and commissioners expressed appreciation for her service.

Deputy Director Villegas reported that the Lottery has finalized a 10-year contract extension with Brightstar, which includes updates to the gaming system and hardware. She thanked Brightstar for its collaborative approach throughout the negotiation process, and Commissioner Hoss commented on the company's commitment to the Lottery's long-term success.

Deputy Director Villegas provided an update on the OneWA implementation, noting the planned October 2027 – October 2028 go-live date.

She also reported that the Lottery has finalized its agreement with its banking partner for the virtual card program. The cards are currently being tested for Apple Pay and Google Pay compatibility, with demonstrations anticipated at the upcoming PDS conference. Kristi Weeks clarified that the funding for the PDS demonstration does not come from Lottery proceeds.

Deputy Director Villegas read the NASPL Powers Award nomination submitted on behalf of Nikki Holien. Commissioners discussed Nikki's tenure with the Lottery and thanked staff for sharing the nomination.

Legislative & Legal Services Update:

Kristi Weeks reported that since the last meeting, the legal Division has processed 14 new formal and informal public records requests. There are no new lawsuits or requests for administrative hearings. She also provided an update on the previously discussed claim involving a woman who tripped outside the Federal Way office. The Department of Enterprise Services denied the claim after reviewing surveillance footage, and the matter has been resolved.

Kristi shared several developments related to prediction markets. She noted that the World Lottery Association recently published a position paper characterizing prediction markets as unlicensed betting and outlining concerns regarding sports integrity, consumer protection, and the lottery industry. She also reported that the Minnesota Legislature passed legislation prohibiting prediction markets, though implementation is currently being challenged by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. Similar legislation is pending in Hawaii and North Carolina. Additionally, the National Council on Problem Gambling announced a \$2 million partnership with Kalshi to support responsible trading initiatives. Kristi expressed concerns that these efforts do not address the fundamental issue that prediction markets function as unregulated gambling.

Kristi then provided an overview of preparations for the 2027 legislative session. Following a meeting with legislative directors, the Office of Financial Management, and the Governor's Office, she reported that budget challenges remain a primary concern. The Governor's legislative priorities include implementing universal free school meals, banning cell phones in K-12 schools, requiring financial aid applications for high school students unless they opt out, continuing efforts to streamline licensing and permitting processes, and reducing agency reporting requirements. Kristi also shared updates to the agency request bill process. Agencies have been provided additional guidance this year, with legislative packets due to the Governor's Office by September 14th, 2026. She noted there will be an increased emphasis on Tribal engagement, including more detailed expectations for documenting consultation and collaboration with Tribes during bill development.

Commissioner Hoss asked whether the Office of Financial Management and the Governor's Office recognized the Lottery's unique role as a revenue-generating agency during ongoing budget discussions. Kristi responded that agencies are currently being asked to identify reductions based on their individual circumstances rather than implementing across-the-board cuts, which provides the Lottery an opportunity to demonstrate that reductions could negatively affect state revenue. She cautioned that broader budget reductions may still occur in future fiscal years as projected budget deficits continue.

Chair Giniger commented on recent media attention surrounding prediction markets and partnerships with public influencers, noting concerns about misinformation and ongoing regulatory developments. Kristi added that some prediction market platforms are beginning to implement measures intended to address

regulatory concerns, such as collecting employment information from users, but she questioned the effectiveness of those measures. The discussion concluded with acknowledgment of the evolving regulatory landscape and the ongoing legal tension between state regulation and federal oversight of prediction markets.

Washington Student Achievement Council Presentation:

Dan Oliver, Director of Research for the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), provided an overview of the agency, the Washington College Grant, and WSAC's data and research initiatives. Dan explained that WSAC is a state agency responsible for policy development, planning, and research to advance educational opportunities and attainment throughout Washington. The agency also administers state financial aid programs, including the Washington College Grant, College Bound Scholarship, and state college savings programs. WSAC is governed by a 10-member council representing several education sectors, students, and members of the public. The two citizen-member positions are currently vacant.

WSAC's strategic framework centers on equity, with a focus on affordability, enrollment, student support, basic needs, and educational completion. Dan noted that while financial aid helps cover tuition and fees, many students continue to face challenges related to housing, transportation, and other living expenses. Washington's statewide postsecondary attainment goal is 70 percent, and the state is currently at approximately 62 percent. Educational attainment includes traditional college degrees as well as apprenticeships, workforce credentials, and other postsecondary training programs.

Commissioners asked how Washington's attainment rate compares nationally. Dan noted that while he did not have national comparison data available, Washington consistently ranks among the nation's leaders in educational attainment while continuing to pursue improvements. He also explained that WSAC evaluates educational attainment across demographic groups and geographic regions to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities.

Dan reported that Washington remains one of the nation's most generous states for need-based financial aid, ranking second behind New Jersey based on the most recent available data. Commissioners asked what contributed to New Jersey's increase and whether differences in educational costs affected the comparison. Dan stated that he would research the issue further. He emphasized that increasing completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) remains one of the most effective ways to connect eligible students with available financial aid, noting that many students who qualify do not complete the application because they are unaware of available assistance or lack access to required family income information.

Dan provided an overview of the Washington College Grant, a need-based financial aid program available to eligible students attending approved public and private institutions as well as qualifying apprenticeship programs. He explained that the program became an entitlement in 2019, replacing the previous first-come, first-served funding structure. As a first-dollar scholarship, the Washington College Grant can be combined with federal Pell Grants, institutional aid, and other financial assistance, allowing students to receive additional support for expenses beyond tuition and fees.

Dan explained that eligibility for the Washington College Grant is based on income and family size. Students from lower-income households may qualify for full tuition and fees, while those with higher household incomes may receive partial awards. FAFSA applicants generally use their parents' income

until they are considered financially independent. Dan noted that this creates opportunities to reengage adult learners, who may become newly eligible for additional aid once eligibility is based on their own income.

Dan reviewed the funding sources supporting the Washington College Grant (WA Grant), including the State General Fund, Workforce Education Investment Account, Education Legacy Trust Account, and Washington Opportunity Pathways Account (WOPA). Commissioners noted the projected decrease in WOPA funding allocated to the Washington College Grant and requested clarification regarding the change. Dan explained that the figures reflected WOPA distributions to the grant rather than the Lottery's overall contribution to WOPA and agreed to conduct additional research. Commissioners emphasized the importance of ensuring external audiences understand that the Lottery's overall contribution has not diminished.

Dan shared examples of WSAC's recent WA Grant marketing campaign, which includes digital advertisements produced in partnership with a marketing firm and the Lottery. Lottery staff noted that campaign materials have also been promoted through Lottery communication channels, expanding the campaign's reach.

Dan then discussed WSAC's research and data capabilities. Because the agency administers state financial aid programs, it can analyze students' complete financial aid packages, including Washington College Grants, Pell Grants, institutional aid, and federal loans. WSAC also has access to statewide FAFSA data, which supports financial aid outreach and policy planning.

WSAC has partnered with the Department of Revenue to identify students and families who may qualify for the Working Families Tax Credit but have not yet applied. Dan also described the agency's partnership with the Education Research and Data Center, which combines education, financial aid, and employment information to evaluate the effectiveness of financial aid programs and study employment outcomes for Washington students.

Dan demonstrated WSAC's public data dashboards, including tools that track educational attainment, FAFSA completion, and other agency performance measures. He reported that Washington's FAFSA completion rate has increased substantially over the previous year, attributing the improvement to both WSAC's statewide FAFSA outreach campaign and federal efforts to simplify the application process. He noted that Washington has also improved its ranking compared with other states.

The dashboard allows users to compare FAFSA completion rates by high school, school district, county, and other geographic areas. WSAC has also developed a FAFSA completion leaderboard organized by athletic league, allowing schools to compare their progress with similarly situated schools.

Commissioners expressed appreciation for the ability to compare communities of different sizes and noted that the dashboard provides valuable, localized information.

Dan reviewed WSAC's public performance dashboards, which organize agency data around affordability, enrollment, basic needs, and educational completion. The affordability dashboard includes year-over-year FAFSA completion rates, comparisons between students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals and those who do not, financial aid award levels, and the percentage of eligible students receiving need-based aid.

Kristi Weeks asked whether implementation of universal free school meals could affect WSAC's ability to identify students eligible for free or reduced-price meal programs. Dan explained that WSAC relies on student eligibility rather than meal participation. Eligibility data is collected through applications and through partnerships with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and public benefit programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). He acknowledged that universal meal programs could affect future data collection if fewer families complete eligibility applications, although schools may continue collecting the information because it is used to determine eligibility for other educational programs and services.

Following the presentation, commissioners discussed the need to reconcile WSAC and Office of Financial Management figures regarding Washington Opportunity Pathways Account funding. Commissioners also requested updated information regarding the number of students who benefit annually from Lottery-supported WOPA funding, noting that duplicated and unduplicated counts have historically made it difficult to communicate a consistent figure publicly.

Commissioners expressed support for continuing joint marketing efforts between WSAC and the Lottery to increase public awareness of the Washington College Grant, apprenticeship funding, and other educational programs supported by Lottery proceeds. Lottery staff noted that WSAC campaign materials have been shared through Lottery communication channels, including retail advertising displays, and expressed interest in continuing collaborative outreach efforts.

Commissioner Hoss thanked Dan for the presentation and praised the partnership between WSAC and the Lottery. He emphasized that supporting educational opportunities through WSAC is central to the Lottery's mission and expressed appreciation for the ongoing cooperation between the two agencies.

Chair Giniger agreed that educating the public about how Lottery proceeds support education remains especially important. She shared that she recently encountered a member of the apprenticeship community who was unaware that Lottery proceeds help fund apprenticeship programs and noted that continued public education remains a priority.

Commissioners also discussed whether Washington's investment in apprenticeship, certification, and workforce training programs may influence comparisons with other states that focus financial aid primarily on traditional higher education programs.

Commissioner Sullivan thanked Dan for the presentation, stating that it provided a valuable overview of WSAC's work and reaffirmed the importance of the Lottery's partnership with the agency. Commissioners expressed interest in receiving regular updates from WSAC regarding future initiatives and opportunities for continued collaboration.

Financial Report: FY26 Q4 Update:

Todd Steben presented the FY26 fourth quarter financial update through April 30. Year-to-date revenue reached \$851 million, exceeding budget by \$35 million and increasing \$64 million over the prior year. Expenses were \$646 million, approximately \$14 million over budget, primarily due to higher sales-driven costs. Beneficiary contributions totaled over \$205 million, exceeding budget by \$30 million and increasing more than \$32 million compared to the previous year.

Todd reported that current sales trends closely mirror FY23. Scratch tickets continue to account for approximately 63% of sales, with premium (high price point) scratch tickets now representing over 60% of scratch sales. While premium tickets carry lower profit margins, this shift was anticipated and has been incorporated into financial planning and expense management strategies.

Despite a slight decline in scratch ticket sales compared to the previous year, beneficiary contributions from the scratch portfolio remain positive. The draw portfolio experienced significant growth, driven largely by strong Powerball jackpot runs, resulting in a 32% increase in revenue and approximately \$24 million in additional beneficiary contributions compared to the prior year.

Todd also reviewed the overall allocation of lottery revenues, noting that more than 62% of sales are returned to players as prizes. More than \$147 million has been contributed to the Washington Opportunity Pathways Account (WOPA), retailers have earned over \$42 million in commissions, and administrative expenses remain approximately 6% below the prior year, reflecting continued operational efficiencies.

Commissioner Hoss noted the significant contributions being made to the state's General Fund and suggested revisiting the statutory threshold that determines those transfers. He expressed concern that the threshold, established many years ago, has not kept pace with inflation or the increasing costs of education and recommended considering adjustments to better support student beneficiaries. Todd agreed the discussion was timely, referencing recent Office of Financial Management data indicating inflation has exceeded **30%**, and said staff would revisit the analysis and provide updated information. Kristi Weeks clarified that any change to the statutory threshold would require legislative action and would need to follow the Governor's budget development and agency request legislation processes.

Todd shared a preliminary update through May, reporting anticipated year-to-date revenues of approximately \$928 million and beneficiary contributions exceeding \$222 million, noting that the strong financial momentum has continued.

Commissioners thanked Todd and the finance team for their accurate financial forecasting, strategic planning, and strong fiscal management throughout the year. Todd credited the organization's success to collaboration across the Lottery team and their shared commitment to maximizing beneficiary contributions.

Brief meeting recess at 10:32 a.m.; meeting reconvened at 10:47 a.m.

Sales and Marketing Update

Randy provided an update on sales, promotions, and retail operations. Recent promotional campaigns exceeded expectations, generating more than 16,500 qualifying wagers and approximately \$165,000 in sales. Staff continue to build promotional campaigns into the Lottery's calendar, and an updated 18-month promotional calendar is expected to be presented at the next commission meeting.

Randy reported that Washington's Lottery remains on pace to achieve its \$977 million annual sales goal, with the possibility of approaching the \$1 billion milestone if strong sales continue through the end of the fiscal year. In-state games continue to perform well, providing a balanced portfolio alongside Powerball. Regional office vending machine sales continue to exceed expectations, generating more than \$1.1 million in sales since their installation. Randy credited regional staff for actively promoting lottery products and engaging customers.

Randy also announced that Brightstar has completed installation of Tap Pay on nearly all lottery vending machines. Although the feature has not yet been formally promoted, customer adoption has been strong, with recent activity totaling nearly 5,800 transactions and more than \$121,000 in sales. He noted that Tap Pay is among the most secure payment methods available and helps meet customer expectations for convenient, cashless transactions.

Randy shared an update on the upcoming X's & O's NFL-themed game. While the national launch is currently scheduled for September 8, Washington anticipates launching the game on November 9 to allow additional preparation. Staff continue working with MUSL and other lottery partners on marketing, second-chance promotions, and implementation.

Kathi Patnode provided updates on public relations and marketing initiatives. Recent media outreach highlighted beneficiary contributions, major prize winners, and unclaimed prizes nearing expiration. She also introduced the upcoming Keys and Cash scratch ticket, featuring the Lottery's first instant-win vehicle prizes, which will be supported through billboard, gas station television, and social media advertising.

Kathi highlighted the Lottery's continued partnership with the Washington Student Achievement Council, sharing short testimonial videos featuring Washington College Grant recipients across social media platforms. She noted the campaign has generated strong engagement while increasing public awareness of Lottery-funded educational opportunities.

Additional marketing efforts include continued beneficiary-focused social media campaigns, trend-based digital content, and development of the FY27 Department Imagination campaign and this year's Seahawks second-chance promotion, which will feature a game-day experience prize package. Commissioners thanked staff for the extensive work taking place across the Sales and Marketing division and commended the team's creativity and continued success.

Scratch Artwork

Gaylene Gray presented preliminary artwork and concepts for the 2027 scratch ticket lineup, including several holiday-themed ticket concepts and two proposed designs for a future \$50 scratch ticket. The presentation was intended to provide the commission with an early look at potential products before final artwork, launch schedules, and product strategies are finalized.

Commissioners discussed the anticipated launch timeline for the \$50 ticket. Staff explained that they are strategically evaluating where the new product fits within the existing scratch ticket portfolio to avoid competing with other major ticket launches, including seasonal holiday games. While no launch date has been established, staff expects to have a proposed timeline and product strategy available for review at the August Commission meeting.

Commissioners expressed appreciation for the thoughtful planning process and agreed that taking a strategic approach to the rollout would help maximize the product's success.

Commission Business/Agenda Items:

Chair Giniger invited commissioners to suggest agenda items for future meetings. Commissioner Hoss requested a presentation on the Lottery's economic development funding, specifically the Strategic

Reserve Fund (SRF), to better understand how lottery dollars support business development, job creation, and economic growth throughout Washington. Staff indicated they would explore inviting a representative from the Department of Commerce or another appropriate agency to present at a future meeting.

Chair Giniger also suggested inviting the Washington State Apprenticeship Council to provide an overview of its programs and the impact of lottery-supported funding. Staff will explore adding the presentation to a future commission agenda.

Public Comment:

Chair Giniger opened the public comment period. One written comment was submitted by Jay, a member of the public, encouraging the Commission to support legislation allowing complete anonymity for lottery winners, citing concerns about privacy, personal safety, and the accessibility of public records.

Kristi explained that House Bill 1221 (2023) codified the Lottery's existing practice of releasing only a winner's name and city of residence in response to public records requests. She noted the legislation did not expand anonymity but ensured additional personal information would not be subject to disclosure. She also explained that no amendments seeking broader anonymity were introduced during the bill's consideration.

Commissioners discussed the balance between protecting winner privacy and maintaining public confidence that lottery prizes are awarded to legitimate winners. Chair Giniger thanked the commenter and noted that player privacy remains an important topic for ongoing consideration.

Adjournment:

Chair Giniger adjourned the meeting at 11:22am.

The June 11, 2026, Lottery Commission Meeting Minutes were approved this _____ day of _____, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Giniger, Commission Chair

Bariah Rice, Executive Assistant