

WAVOAD General Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2026

Meeting led by Christie Merrill, WA-VOAD President, Red Cross

Meeting called to order by Christie Merrill for February 3, 2026, at 10:00 AM

In Attendance: 43 participants, including Christie Merrill Red Cross (President), Jim Cooper United Ways of the Pacific Northwest (VP), Brian Brozovic Operation BBQ Relief (acting Secretary), Ray Shjerven SWWA ELCA (Treasurer), Kathy Bryson UMCOR/PNW United Methodist Church Disaster Response (Past President), Larry Mays Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (Member at Large), Carlene Anders Disaster Leadership Team (Member at Large), Zack Gifford WA EMD, and others noted below:

Forrest Wilkinson – Brethren Disaster Ministries

Her Kait Seet - Tzu Chi Foundation

James Mahon- Churches of Scientology Disaster Response

Jay DeBoer - World Renew

Susan Anderson, ASPCA

Marty Grisham, Latter-Day Saints Charities

Geri Chumley, Whatcom County COAD

Jill Watson, Seattle Human Services

Lisa Arellano, The Salvation Army

Patty Baker, Episcopal Church

Michael Claypool, International Orthodox Christian Charities

Cindy Barker, Seattle Emergency Hubs

Alan Van Boven

Bob Berley

Brian Baer – The Elevated Studio

Eric Williams – Second Harvest Inland NW

Erin McCann - ARC

Eva Escape – WA EMD

Michael Ervick – Paradise Valley Community Association

Paul Love – WCC/ECY

Stephanie Donahue - Team Rubicon, Chicane Strategies, and Longview Solutions IMT

Tim Perciful – Best Friends Animal Society

Tyler Verda – Snohomish Co. Human Services

Dana Bryson

Jamie M – Food Lifeline

Amee Bartlett – Save the Children

Art Garciano – ToolBank Disaster Services

Jim House - Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning

Dave & Laura Jones – Just Serve

Lexi Nobles – American Logistics Aid Network

Louise Darcy – City of Puyallup CERT

Jill Watson – Seattle Human Services Dept

Kyle Christensen
Po-Chen Yang – Tzu Chi Foundation
Sue Pniewski – AFN Program Manager WA EMD

Minutes Review

Approval of December 2, 2025 minutes. Kathy moved, Larry seconded, passed unanimously.

Financial Review

Ray Shjerven shared the following review of the financials:

February 2026 financials			
Operating Checking			
	Beginning Balance		
			12017.13
	Hover for Domain		16.19
	NVOAD dues		35
	Google Workspace		200
	New Balance		11756.94
	Segregated Savings		5161.65
	December interest		1.1
	January interest		1.1
	New Balance		5163.85

Questions were asked and answered. Larry moved to accept the Treasurer's report, Carlene seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Christie asked the WAVOAD leadership team to introduce themselves.

- Christie Merrill introduced herself as the new Chair.
- Brian Brozovic confirmed as Acting Secretary (motion by Ray Shjerven, second by Larry Mays, approved).
- Jim Cooper now serves as Vice President

Presentation

State VAL Role (Zack Gifford, WA EMD)

- Zack is temporarily serving as Human Services Program Supervisor while Taylor Dietz is on leave.
- The Volunteer Agency Liaison (VAL) role connects state emergency management with VOAD partners for unmet needs coordination.
- Key points:
- VAL helps route resource requests from local jurisdictions via WebEOC.
- MOUs exist for donations, feeding, and volunteer management, but engagement is open to all partners.
- Suggested creating one page capability summaries for each VOAD member.
- Emphasized the need for recovery phase training and inclusion of VOAD in state exercises.
- Current FEMA IA request submitted; SBA loans approved for Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King, and Lewis Counties (Pierce eligible as contiguous).
- PA request expected mid February.
- ESF 6 team coordinating with Seattle for 2026 World Cup planning

Accessibility & AFN Coordination

- Jim House (CIEP) and Sue Pniewski (WA EMD) discussed improving inclusion of disability-led organizations in VOAD.
- Plan to recruit more AFN-focused partners and ensure interpretation and accessibility at future trainings.
- Agreement for continued collaboration between CIEP, EMD, and VOAD leadership

President's Report: Christie Merrill

- New Member Approvals
- Save the Children (Amea Barlet) – presented child-focused disaster response and recovery programs.
- Paradise Valley Community Association (Michael Ervick) – community mobilization and CERT-based training.
- Both approved as Class B members (motion by Jim Cooper, second by Carlene Anders)

Website & Communications

- Website updates underway: logos, contact links, calendar, and story submissions.
- Members should email corrections or stories to info@wavoad.org.
- Bylaws and membership class definitions shared via Google Doc (not posted publicly).
- Feedback requested on adding membership class info to the site

National VOAD Conference

- Dates: May 4–7, 2026 in Reno, NV (Peppermill Resort).
- Two \$550 scholarships available; application form distributed.
 - Contact us at info@wavoad.org to be sent an application or follow the link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSePMzsLoycEZJmJDvY1zBcWxGZl_ohJcPkaL6yh4ZAM2gMAOQ/viewform?usp=header
- Members encouraged to register early for hotel reservations

Additional Notes

- We welcome suggestions from members on Meeting topics or training suggestions

Long-Term Recovery & Training

- LTRG Training: February 9 (Zoom) – over 75 registered.
LTRG – What WAVOAD organizations are helping to support and mentoring with LTRG communities?
- LTRG National VOAD training 2/9 9-1pm. Register at
<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/66t66sr7Q62by3xMxkvGrA>

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Organizational Structure Discussion

- Proposal to explore converting WA VOAD from 501(c)(6) to 501(c)(3).
 - Benefits: eligibility for free nonprofit tools (Google Workspace, Zoom), potential cost savings (~\$400–\$1,000 annually).
 - Concerns: added reporting, donation management workload.
 - Motion (Carlene Anders, second Jim Cooper): Leadership to research process and bring back recommendations.
 - Motion passed with quorum (10 voting members).
- Discussion also included need for Directors & Officers insurance
- 501(c)(3) designation
 - Discussion, nonprofit savings,
 - Carlene motion to make a 501(c)(3), Jim second, passed
 - Leadership team look at process Carlene motion, second Jim, passed

Report Outs

No EM report outs

Member/Partner/Government Organization Report – Outs

(Share any lessons learned from recent deployments- Deployment report out)

- Salvation Army (Lisa Arellano): Disaster Case Management ongoing; biweekly county data reports; coordination with AFN partners.
- CIEP (Jim House): Working with DSHS to map disability data for disaster planning. CIEP is writing up an After-Action Report on AFN issues that emerged during the disaster response
- Church of Scientology Disaster Response (Jim Mahon): Volunteer teams assisted blind resident cleanup in Snoqualmie.
- UMCOR (Kathy Bryson): Two ERT teams deployed to Whatcom; \$30K gap funding for DCM; training new case managers.
- Snohomish County Human Services (Tyler Verda): DACs supported by multiple VOAD partners; debris removal and trailer replacement assistance ongoing.
- Disaster Leadership Team (Carlene Anders): Promoting LTRG training and national association info sessions.
- American Red Cross (Erin McCann): 114 cases opened; six families rehoused via grant-funded RVs.
- ToolBank Disaster Services (Art Garciacano): Offers free tool trailers for recovery projects.

- World Renew (Jay DeBoer): Beginning home repairs in Whatcom; volunteer housing arranged.
- Church of the Brethren Disaster Ministries (Forrest Wilkinson): Children's Disaster Services supported shelters.
- City of Seattle (Human Services Dept., Jill Watson): Preparing for potential Seahawks victory parade (~700K attendees expected) and FIFA World Cup 2026 coordination
- Tzu Chi report out (Her Kait already left) Po-Chen Yang
 - 1) TC closed the emergency relief financial assistance application as of Jan 31
 - 2) TC continues to review all the applications received and plan to complete the distribution in Feb
- Ray
- Jim – United Way is working on a fund distribution model. We have raised \$1.4M to date.
- Tim Perciful- best friends animal society

Action Items & Next Steps

1. Leadership Team: Research 501(c)(3) transition and D&O insurance options.
2. Members:
 - Verify logos and contact info on website.
 - Submit flood response stories to info@wavoad.org.
 - Register for Feb 9 LTRG training and April 7 meeting.
 - Apply for National VOAD scholarships if attending Reno conference.
3. AFN Coordination: Sue Pniewski and Jim House to align on accessibility improvements.
4. Zack Gifford (WA EMD): Provide FEMA IA/PA status updates and share VAL slides with Christie Merrill.
5. All Members: Continue sharing unmet needs and recovery updates through VOAD channels

Next Meeting – Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 10am Seattle Red Cross - Hybrid In Person/Virtual
Focus: After-Disaster Review and Improvement Planning

Meeting adjourned by Christie Merrill at 11:55 am.

Respectfully submitted by Brian Brozovic, WaVOAD Acting Secretary