

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes

June 10, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The third meeting of the Information Technology Oversight Committee was held on June 10, 2026, at 10:00 AM ET/9:00 AM CT in Room 129 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Gex Williams, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Matt Lockett, Co-Chair; Senator Gex Williams, Co-Chair; Senators Keturah J. Herron and Michael J. Nemes; and Representatives Chad Aull and John Hodgson.

Guests: Barbie Dickens, General Counsel, Finance and Administration Cabinet; Jim Barnhart, Chief Information Officer (CIO), Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT), Finance and Administration Cabinet; Jason Johnson, Deputy Executive Director, Kentucky Communications Network Authority (KCNA); Michael McKerley, President, Zayo Education, General Manager, Public Sector, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs; Steven Schwerbel, Director of State Advocacy, WISPA - The Association for Broadband Without Boundaries; TJ Scott, Chief Operating Officer (COO) and General Manager, Broadlinc; and John Gill, Founder and Owner, Kentucky Fi.

LRC Staff: Cynthia Brown, Kevin Miller, Sarah Watts, and Heather Hamilton.

Kentucky Communications Network Authority (KCNA) Request for Proposal Process

In response to Chair Williams, Jim Barnhart, CIO, COT, Finance and Administration Cabinet, stated the request for proposal (RFP) started in 2025 and was ongoing until it was paused due to a protest. COT was not involved in the original writing or releasing of the RFP, because it was listed as non-technical. Barbie Dickens, General Counsel, Finance and Administration Cabinet, discussed the procurement process for the RFP between KCNA and the Office of Procurement Services (OPS). She described how an agency, and not its board, directs a procurement.

In response to Co-Chair Lockett, Ms. Dickens stated she did not know who within KCNA made the decision about the RFP. She specified 2026 RS HB 314 did not change the powers and duties of the board and the RFP proceeded in the same manner as any other procurement OPS works on with agencies.

In response to Chair Williams, Ms. Dickens stated an agency working with OPS can cancel or reissue an RFP. She is unaware of a formal request to cancel the RFP. The RFP was to replace the underlining contract that was terminated. Mr. Barnhart commented on the disallowance of his previous cancellation request for the RFP and why the RFP should continue at this time. He agreed that he has the authority to request the cancellation of the RFP. Ms. Dickens commented, in general, on the role of OPS in working with COT.

Overview of the Kentucky Wired Infrastructure Company (KWIC) Board and Funding of the Kentucky Wired Network Refresh

Mr. Barnhart provided an overview of the KWIC Board, the KWIC Board's composition, and the funding structure for the network refresh and maintenance.

In response to Representative Aull, Mr. Barnhart discussed the availability of capital funds and the timeline for the refresh.

In response to Chair Williams, Mr. Barnhart stated he was not aware of or involved with any contract dispute between Ledcor and Kentucky Wired Operations Company (KWOC). Jason Johnson, Deputy Executive Director, KCNA, stated KWOC has a 30-year contract with Ledcor until there is another service provider. Mr. Barnhart commented on KWOC's delay in starting the refresh and its failure to award a contract to the lowest bidder. He does not believe KWOC ever issued an RFP or needs to issue an RFP.

Co-Chair Lockett commented on statutes outlining the duties of the board.

Chair Williams agreed with Co-Chair Lockett on the intent of 2026 RS HB 314.

Zayo Network Services

Michael McKerley, President, Zayo Education, General Manager, Public Sector, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs, provided an overview of Zayo Group and Zayo Education's services and network. Using federal and state grants, Zayo has developed a Middle Mile Digital Expansion Access Network (DEAN) to build out a middle mile infrastructure and expand broadband in rural and underserved areas. Mr. McKerley

shared how Zayo has developed and expanded middle mile fiber optic networking in Nevada.

In response to Chair Williams, Mr. McKerley explained open access networks and the importance of a market competitive rate, good fiber optics, and secure authorized access to In-Line Amplifiers (ILAs). He described the processes for connecting to the network in private transactions and buying wave services. He gave examples of how middle mile and the last mile connections are made and how school districts are connected for the last mile. The equipment used in the engineering, design, internet access, and transport to internet access pops is the same for every school district in the state. The last mile connectivity to most school districts in the Commonwealth utilize KCNA and Commonwealth-owned assets for the middle mile and a variety of last mile infrastructures owned by other organizations. Thirty-eight school district sites do not use KCNA's KentuckyWired for middle mile transport. School districts have not had outages that caused Zayo to violate its service level agreements with the Kentucky Department of Education, but Zayo has worked with smaller providers to resolve field access issues and meet timelines to ensure connectivity. Mr. McKerley confirmed as a tier I network, Zayo does not buy internet transit.

Discussion on Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Funding

Steven Schwerbel, Director of State Advocacy, WISPA - The Association for Broadband Without Boundaries, provided an update on the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD) program and funding in Kentucky. Kentucky plans to invest approximately \$377 million out of its total \$1.09 billion BEAD investment into network expansion that will connect all locations across the Commonwealth. Mr. Schwerbel suggested funding a replacement program for the federal Affordable Connectivity Program, and discussed the National Telecommunications and Information Administration BEAD contracts with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) that are due in August. Mr. Schwerbel cautioned not every ISP awarded a BEAD contract will be able to fulfill it. He recommended to engage with the local ISP community, prioritize end-user experience and independent metrics over specific technology preferences, and build strong relationships and clear communication with the broadband office.

TJ Scott, COO and General Manager, Broadlinc, provided an overview of how Broadlinc uses BEAD funding to help connect underserved communities and highlighted the exceptional process of working with the broadband office.

John Gill, Founder and Owner, Kentucky Fi, discussed connectivity and reliability issues experienced by ISPs.

In response to Chair Williams, Mr. Gill responded that some service ISPs need to use KentuckyWired connections to build BEAD funded networks. Mr. Scott shared some of the difficulties the private ISPs have had with KentuckyWired because of the ongoing dispute with KCNA and the wholesaler. A timeline for the KentuckyWired middle mile to be ready for implementation of the last mile broadband was discussed. Mr. Schwerbel offered to assist COT by providing webinars and educational opportunities. Mr. Gill commented on the middle mile equipment refresh. Discussions regarding dark and lit fiber focused on access and maintaining affordable internet service for the end user.

Next Meeting

July 8, 2026, at 10 AM ET/9:00 AM CT in the Capitol Annex Room 129, chaired by Co-Chair Lockett.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the committee, the committee adjourned.