

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes

August 13, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fourth meeting of the Information Technology Oversight Committee was held on August 13, 2025, at 10:00 AM 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; Senator Michael J. Nemes; and Representatives Chad Aull and John Hodgson.

Guests: Robert Morphonios, CEO, KentuckyWired Operations Company (KWOC); Tom Snyder, Chief Operating Officer, KWOC; Patrick Hughes, Outside Counsel, KWOC; Steven Scherbel, Director of State Advocacy, WISPA; John Gill, Owner, Kentucky Fi; TJ Scott, COO and General Manager, Broadlinc; Charles Byers, Chief Information Officer, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC); Zach Ramsey, Director, AOC; Matt Frey, Executive Director, Public Policy and State Government Audits and Technology; Jonathan Grate, Ombudsman, Commonwealth Office of the Ombudsman; Heather Wagers, Deputy Ombudsman, Commonwealth Office of the Ombudsman; Jay Hartz, Director, Legislative Research Commission (LRC); and Johnathan Harris, Deputy Director for Computing and Information Technology, LRC.

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

Approval of Minutes

Co-Chair Lockett made a motion, seconded by Representative Hodgson, to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2025, meeting. The motion passed by voice vote.

Discussion of ITOC Form Submissions

Legislative Research Commission

Jay Hartz, Director, LRC, responded to Representative Aull, explaining safety and security actions taken by LRC.

Responding to Co-Chair Lockett, Mr. Hartz answered they are looking at commercial products that would block the personal information of government officials from the public.

Responding to Representative Hodgson, Johnathan Harris, Deputy Director for Computing and Information Technology, LRC, stated they do not have specific issues with transferring data between the branches of government. The standardization of data among state government could be explored.

Responding to Chair Williams, Mr. Hartz stated they are already preparing for redistricting. There will be resources in the LRC library during redistricting for staff and the public.

Discussion of the KentuckyWired Network

KentuckyWired Operations Company

Robert Morphonios, CEO, KWOC, provided an overview of the relationship between KWOC, Kentucky Communications Network Authority (KCNA), and Open Fiber.

Responding to Chair Williams, Mr. Morphonios stated they are a private entity and do not follow government procurement codes. Patrick Hughes, Outside Counsel, KWOC, clarified the difference between the non-profit KentuckyWired Infrastructure Company (KWIC) and the private, for-profit, KWOC. Mr. Morphonios explained KCNA oversees the project for the Commonwealth and KWOC is the developer that designs, builds, operates, and maintains the project. KWOC has the responsibility to make technical decisions for the network, but there is a process for change orders.

Responding to Co-Chair Lockett, Mr. Morphonios explained the change order process and the relationship between KCNA, KWOC, and Accelecom.

Responding to Chair Williams, Mr. Morphonios stated there are no third parties to the wholesale contract with Accelecom. Tom Snyder, Chief Operating Officer, KWOC, explained how the change process differs between COT and Accelecom.

Responding to Representative Hodgson, Mr. Morphonios said it costs about \$1,000,000 a month to operate the network and KWOC receives an additional \$250,000 for their oversight of the network. Mr. Hughes added these amounts do not include the debt service on the original project.

Responding to Chair Williams, Mr. Snyder stated repairs and outages are the responsibility of the service provider. He explained there are different time frames for repairs based on site categories.

Wireless Internet Service Providers Association

Steven Scherbel, Director of State Advocacy, WISPA, discussed concerns among WISPA members and other internet service providers that use the KentuckyWired network.

Responding to Chair Williams, John Gill, Owner, Kentucky Fi, stated approximately 15,000 to 20,000 customers are subject to disconnect or reliability issues. Of those, only 15 to 20 percent would have other connectivity alternatives.

Responding to Co-Chair Lockett, Mr. Gill replied it would take months, if not years, to reconnect some customers. Those with an alternative connection option could take a week to a month.

Responding to Representative Aull, Mr. Gill said both businesses and individuals are included in the number of approximate customers that would be subject to disconnect or reliability issues, and Kentucky Fi is their primary connection.

Responding to Chair Williams, Mr. Gill explained issues with losing federal grant funding. Mr. Scherbel added that state or private providers would have to find other funds to cover the cost of reconnecting customers if federal funds are no longer available. TJ Scott, COO and General Manager, Broadlinc, discussed the feasibility of a new wholesale provider and lack of customer consideration. Mr. Gill and Mr. Scott commented on outages due to wire damages.

Responding to Representative Aull, Mr. Gill discussed Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and procedures for repairing outages.

Responding to Co-Chair Lockett, Mr. Gill stated KentuckyWired owns the fiber where Kentucky Fi is connected. Mr. Scherbel commented on the lack of clarity in regards to the ownership of the fiber.

Responding to Chair Williams, Mr. Scherbel asked the committee to work with KCNA and the Governor's office to provide clarity on timelines and a plan for when an RFP might be deployed. Also, they would like customers to have more time to find connection alternatives.

Discussion of ITOC Form Submissions

Administrative Office of the Courts

Zach Ramsey, Director, AOC, presented an overview of Information and Technology Services (ITS) provided by AOC. ITS' budget is \$38.7 million and employs 106 employees.

In response to Co-Chair Lockett, Charles Byers, Chief Information Officer, AOC, replied that criminal background checks are stored in the CourtNet database. He is not aware of any security issues with the database. Audio video recordings are not online and are stored in the courthouses. Mr. Ramsey stated official paper records are stored in the courthouses.

In response to Chair Williams, Mr. Ramsey explained the retention schedule for recordings.

Mr. Byers discussed AOC's information security systems and development of a Court Designated Worker (CDW) evidence-based risk tool.

In response to Chair Williams, Mr. Ramsey stated \$150,000 to redevelop the tool will be included in their October submission to A&R for the 2026-2028 biennium.

Mr. Byers discussed AOC's legacy systems and funding needs.

In response to Representative Hodgson, Mr. Byers said unspent American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds are not at risk of loss.

In response to Representative Aull, Mr. Byers stated they are not on the old mainframe.

Mr. Byers discussed maintenance, upgrades, and cost of courtroom audio video systems.

Auditor of Public Accounts

Matt Frey, Executive Director, Public Policy and State Government Audits and Technology, discussed the investments in Information Technology the Auditor's office is considering.

In response to Chair Williams, Mr. Frey said they are legally required to follow the Governor's policy regarding artificial intelligence (AI).

Jonathan Grate, Ombudsman, Commonwealth Office of the Ombudsman, discussed 2025 Regular Session Senate Bill 25.

Heather Wagers, Deputy Ombudsman, Commonwealth Office of the Ombudsman, discussed IT systems being used and new software being considered.

Next Meeting

September 10, 2025, at 10 AM in Capitol Annex Room 129, chaired by Co-Chair Lockett.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the committee, the committee adjourned at 11:53 AM.