

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes

January 12, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Information Technology Oversight Committee was held on January 12, 2026, at 1:30 PM 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: Senator Gex Williams, Co-Chair; Senators Keturah Herron and Michael Nemes; and Representatives Chad Aull and John Hodgson.

Guests: Doug Hendrix, Executive Director and KentuckyWired Infrastructure Company (KWIC) Board Member, Kentucky Communications Network Authority (KCNA); Greg Gatson, Chief Operating Officer (COO), KCNA; Steve Murphy, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), KCNA; Jason Johnson, Controller, KCNA; Adam Adkins, General Counsel, KCNA; Jim Barnhart, Chief Information Officer (CIO), Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT); David Carter, Deputy CIO, COT; Jerry Wright, Special Advisor to the CIO, COT; John Coleman, Legislative Counsel, Foundation for Individual Rights and Expressions (FIRE); and Michael Frazier, Kentucky Student Rights Coalition.

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

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Representative Hodgson and seconded by Senator Nemes to approve the minutes of the November 11, 2025, meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

KentuckyWired Communications Network Authority (KCNA)

Representatives from KCNA were present to address questions from the committee.

Responding to Senator Williams, Greg Gatson, COO, KCNA, stated that end of service life notices have been provided for a substantial portion of the equipment in service. He does not think any of the equipment has reached its end of support currently, but he

will check to see if the equipment will remain in service for two more years. The list provided to the committee is not all inclusive of every component of the router equipment. All of the components are needed in order to determine the end of service life for the equipment.

Responding to Representative Aull, Mr. Gatson stated they could provide a list of network components and their end of service life dates.

Responding to Senator Williams, Mr. Gatson replied that he would have to check with KentuckyWired Operations Company (KWOC) to get an exact figure on the percentage of network capacity being used. Doug Hendrix, Executive Director and KWIC Board Member, KCNA, cited the project agreement to explain the reason for the timing of the refresh.

Responding to Representative Hodgson, Mr. Hendrix stated KWOC declined to attend on the advice of legal counsel due to the ongoing litigation.

Responding to Senator Williams, Mr. Hendrix discussed the penalties for non-compliance with the contract's refresh requirement. He commented on the status of ongoing lawsuits and the wholesaler replacement request for proposal (RFP). Steve Murphy, CFO, KCNA, discussed the impacts from the bonds on the failure to do the refresh.

Senator Williams requested the following for committee review: contract agreements, a list of network components with corresponding end of service life dates, documentation stating that Ledcor is no longer in a lawsuit, and invoices from KWOC with actual purchase orders from the vendors.

Responding to Senator Williams, Mr. Hendrix re-emphasized that schools are not at risk of being disconnected. He explained the process of the project agreement with KWIC. Mr. Murphy explained the funds process between the Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority (KEDFA) and KWIC. Mr. Hendrix stated KWOC has the vendor invoices for the equipment purchased. He requested the invoices from KWOC and received no response. Their agreement includes disclosures for exchanging information. He explained how the members of the KWIC board are chosen and agreed to send a copy of the by-laws of the board to the committee.

Representative Aull requested a deadline for the refresh to stay within contract.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Free Expression

John Coleman, Legislative Counsel, FIRE, discussed AI policy legislation in Kentucky with regard to the First Amendment.

Responding to Representative Hodgson, Mr. Coleman shared existing laws against defamation. Michael Frazier, Kentucky Student Rights Coalition, expressed that educating individuals on identifying deepfakes is an effective way to combat the damage without restricting free speech.

Responding to Representative Aull, Mr. Coleman confirmed he is an attorney and advocated for extending current speech laws to include AI. Mr. Coleman cautioned against legislation that restricts speech in a way that impedes, rather than assists, the courts in protecting the public.

Responding to Representative Hodgson, Mr. Coleman noted that, while copyright and fair use are governed at the federal level, the unauthorized commercial use of name, image, and likeness is prohibited by various state laws. He explained the difficulties in governing disclosure and labeling laws.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the committee, the committee adjourned at 2:32 PM.