

August 25, 2026

Board of Commissioners
Kittitas Valley Healthcare
603 S. Chestnut Street
Ellensburg, WA 98926

RE: Protest of KVH Board Decision to Discontinue Public Meeting Recordings and Board Packet Access

Dear KVH Board of Commissioners,

We are writing to express our profound disappointment and concern regarding the Board's decision at the July 23 meeting to discontinue the public posting of Board meeting recordings and full Board packets.

This action represents a significant step backward for transparency, accountability, and public trust. As a public hospital, Kittitas Valley Healthcare serves not only its patients, but also its employees and the community that relies on it. Open access to Board deliberations is a critical component of good governance and informed community engagement.

What is particularly troubling is the reasoning discussed during the meeting. Board members voiced concerns about potential AI use, lawsuits, and personal liability arising from statements made during public meetings. Yet there was little to no discussion of how eliminating access to recordings would impact employees, patients, and community members who depend on these tools to stay informed. The conversation appeared focused on protecting decision-makers rather than preserving transparency for those affected by those decisions.

The timing of this decision is also concerning. Earlier in the same meeting, leadership recognized and praised the benefits of artificial intelligence for organizational operations. To then cite fears surrounding AI as justification for restricting public access to Board proceedings reflects a troubling inconsistency. Technology should not become an excuse to reduce transparency.

For many nurses and healthcare workers, attending a 5:00 p.m. Board meeting in person is simply not possible. We work evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays. Recorded meetings have allowed frontline staff to remain informed about decisions impacting our hospital, our patients, and our professions. Removing this access effectively excludes a large segment of the workforce from meaningful engagement.

Transparency should not be viewed as a threat. Public scrutiny and accountability are fundamental responsibilities of public service. If anything, greater access to information strengthens trust between the Board, employees, and the community. Limiting access to Board meetings and records sends the opposite message and risks creating the perception that important discussions are being shielded from those most affected by the Board's decisions.

We respectfully urge the Board to reconsider its decision and restore public access to meeting recordings and Board packets. At a minimum, any changes to long-standing transparency practices should involve meaningful discussion with employees and the community before implementation.

The nurses of KVH deserve the ability to stay informed about matters affecting their hospital. The community deserves access to the actions and deliberations of its elected commissioners. Transparency, accountability, and trust are not merely values to be cited in mission statements; they must be demonstrated through action.

Respectfully,

WSNA Local Unit Officers:

Kara Henderson

Donna McCune

Hanni Johnson

Erik Berkas

Jordan Simon

Anji Bryant

And WSNA