



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Virtual Committee Meeting

Friday, August 15, 2025
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM EDT

MINUTES

Members Present	Members Absent	Guests	Staff
Thursten Simonsen, Chair	Sandeep Mendiratta, V. Chair	Tom Pollard	Joslyn Ratcliff
Franco D'Atri	Sarah Maston, CO	Mohammed Murtaza	
Jeanette Hay			
Ana Perez-Bustamante Garcia			
Brad White			
Carrie Brown, BOD Ex-Officio			
David Roberts			
Waqar Ali Shah			

Part 1 – Administrative

1. Mr. Simonsen called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM and read the ASHRAE Value Statement.
2. Roll call was taken and quorum was met with 7 voting members on the call.
3. Introductions took place around the virtual room with individuals sharing their names, what region they are from and one “bucket list” item.
4. The agenda for the meeting was reviewed and approved.
5. Mr. White moved to approve the June 21 meeting minutes. Mr. D’Atri seconded and the minutes were approved with no discussion. 7-0-0, CV.
6. Mr. Simonsen let the group know that much of what he would cover would be included with the MBOs to be discussed later in the call. In Mr. Mendiratta’s absence, Mr. Simonsen shared that as vice chair, Mr. Mendiratta will be the committee’s PAOE representative and may ask for feedback or assistance from the group as 2026-27 PAOE is developed.
7. Dr. Brown did not have a formal report for the committee, but stated she is here if the committee needs anything.
8. Ms. Ratcliff provided a staff report and updated the committee on motions from Communications Committee to Members Council in Phoenix as follows:

Motion: *Communications Committee recommends to Members Council that Members Council*

recommend to the ASHRAE Board of Directors for approval that ASHRAE permit the use of AI-assisted notetakers and meeting recordings.

Motion Fails.

Motion: *Communications Committee recommends to Members Council to approve editorial changes to 1.201.010 ASHRAE Policy and Procedure for Format, Activity, and Content of Websites for ASHRAE Groups.*

Motion Passes.

The changes have not yet been incorporated into the ROB, but are expected to be the next time the ROB is updated.

Motion: *Communications Committee suggests Members Council moves to approve Fall 2024 CRC Motion, Region VII Bluegrass Chapter – Motion 24-7-1 (July 27, 2024) 2023: Communication Committee to provide virtual training to Chapter Communication Committee Chairs.*

Motion Passes. *(Communications Committee will need to complete this training.)*

Motion: *Communications Committee recommends to Members Council to approve the motion Fall 2024 CRC Motion, Region-at-Large ASHRAE Falcon Chapter – Motion 24-RAL-1 (October 7, 2024): Designate the Communications as a Grassroots Committee and grant the same standing, privileges, and responsibilities as other Grassroots Committees and make Communications Committee a grassroots committee.*

Motion Fails.

The status of the motions and report from the committee to Members Council are [in Basecamp](#) for reference.

Mr. Bourque commented that the committee did its best for the motion for the committee to be grassroots to pass and noted there could have been some reluctance due to the anticipated cost and mentioned the full background was not included in the Members Council agenda. Mr. Simonsen said this is something that could be brought back up by the committee in the future if the committee desired to do so. Regarding the motion for AI notetaking, he mentioned Mr. Littleton shared that AI notetaking is not permissible for ASHRAE.

Ms. Ratcliff also shared that registration, housing, and travel information will soon be available for the 2026 Winter Meeting in Las Vegas and noted she would share as soon as it's available, encouraging all to book quickly once received.

9. Mr. D'Atri presented the draft curriculum for centralized virtual training he put together. He believed the training would be a lot for one day, so he broke it up into parts. The idea of introducing AI into training in terms of what AI can and can't do was brought up. The question regarding approval of next steps the committee would need to take to schedule and go live with training was asked. Ms. Ratcliff will ask Ms. Seymour if the committee needs to follow specific established guidance to move ahead and with scheduling. Mr. D'Atri will continue to build on the draft curriculum with the help of others. Mr. Simonsen noted this is also an MBO and anticipates it carrying into Spring 2026 and even into Fall 2026.

10. Mr. Simonsen noted that artificial intelligence (AI) would be discussed as part of the MBOs. The focus of the discussion is to understand what role the committee can and should play as ASHRAE continues to investigate AI use and noted that AI is written into the new ASHRAE Strategic Plan and Finance Committee reached out to the committee prior to the 2025 Annual Conference to see if the committee had any funding needs for AI and asked Ms. Ratcliff to place the correspondence on Basecamp.

11. MBOs were discussed as follows:

- **MBO #1 – Create a Template/Guideline for Chapter and Regional use when soliciting sponsorships to include a menu of available options as well as details Regions/Chapters will need for delivery.**

Ms. Hay agreed to continue working on this MBO for this Society year and will upload the latest version to Basecamp, where Mr. Bourque, Mr. Roberts, and Mr. White will share at their CRCs.

Volunteer: Jeanette Hay

- **MBO #2 – Complete annual review and update of guidance documents provided by the committee, with emphasis on Basecamp and focus on creation of a 3-year rotation plan where every document is reviewed and updated as needed every 3 years.**

Mr. Simonsen informed the committee that we would like to put together a three-year rotation plan for the committee's guidance documents. He noted of the guidance documents, the most urgent in need of review is Basecamp documentation. Mr. White volunteered to help with this and noted he had reviewed in previous years and that much of the documentation may be able to point to Basecamp's help instead of rewriting. Mr. Simonsen agreed this could be an opportunity to consolidate the documentation.

Ms. Hay noted this MBO will be a lot of work and was hopeful that everyone on the committee will be able to help and asked if it would be possible to list the documentation and have committee members sign up for documents to review. Mr. Simonsen agrees and noted he could add his name and that he's worked on this in previous years. Ms. Hay also asked if it would be possible to get metrics for the documentation and Ms. Ratcliff said she would provide this.

Volunteers: Brad White, Thursten Simonsen, All

- **MBO #3 – Explore establishing a Society-level Communications Award**

Mr. Simonsen suggested this MBO would require a small group with experience at the Region level. Ultimately the need is to write up what is measured and in what categories, the time of year the award is presented, when it is submitted, and when/how evaluations take place.

Mr. D'Atri volunteered to help and asked if it would be for chapter or regional communication chairs and Mr. Simonsen said the group could decide.

The question of whether a motion would need to go to Members Council was brought up and Ms. Ratcliff will find out more information about process. Ms. Ratcliff will also make available via Basecamp information from when this award was previously discussed by this committee.

Mr. Roberts shared that Region X has several awards including for the newsletter, website, social, chair, and website.

Volunteers: David Roberts, Franco D'Atri, Jeanette Hay, Ana Perez-Bustamante Garcia

- **MBO #4 – Create curriculum for virtual training.**

Secretary's note: the curriculum for virtual training was previously discussed in the meeting as its own topic.

Mr. Bourque would like to use the structure in the draft curriculum for the Region II communications training in the CRC and offered to provide feedback from the CRC. The workshop is approximately three hours.

Mr. White suggested that anyone with Communications workshop materials upload them to Basecamp. Ms. Ratcliff will create a folder for this.

Volunteers: Franco D'Atri, Brad White

- **MBO #5 – Update WordPress theme and Wix template.**

Mr. Bourque discussed the status of this MBO as it is a carryover from 2024-25. The committee sought to find a local champion to assist with the Wix template since it was originally created by a member of the committee. Mr. Roberts stated he uses the Wix template in Region X and can assist with updating the theme to more closely reflect ASHRAE branding, similar to the Wordpress theme.

Ms. Ratcliff updated the committee that the vendor is ready to move forward with the changes to the Wordpress theme. The next steps are for the group to approve the vendor's list of items to be changed and to provide boilerplate text for the committees for the vendor to add to the website. Mr. Bourque noted the last item is with him and that he can continue assisting with it.

Volunteers: David Roberts, Daniel Bourque

- **MBO #6 – Explore and report on needs/wants and potential capabilities of AI could be used for ASHRAE Communications needs.**

Mr. Simonsen shared that Finance Committee redheaded out prior to Phenix to ask if

Communications Committee had any financial needs regarding AI support. Mr Simonsen replied and asked Ms. Ratcliff to share this information on Basecamp. He further suggested what could be needed for this MBO would be to brainstorm what's actionable, what recommendations to make as well as any funding that may be needed. Ms. Hay suggested a focus could be on how AI could be used in communications vs. how it could be used across Society. Ms. Ratcliff shared she checked with staff working on AI and that there is an MTG consultant working on AI for ASHRAE and she what more she can find out to ensure the committee is not duplicating work being done elsewhere. The suggestion was made that Communications Committee assign a liaison to MTG. Ms. Ratcliff will look into this and ideally a liaison will be assigned as what is done for other standing committees.

Mr. Simonsen suggested it may be worthwhile to consider a survey of RVCs to see what chapters / regions are currently doing. In addition, collecting information from members and looking at what already exists could be helpful. He mentioned Basecamp as an example, to see what, if anything, Basecamp plans to use AI for.

Secretary's note: Ms. Ratcliff previously checked on this and although Basecamp doesn't have any public plans to implement AI, the company is open to any suggestions ASHRAE may have.

12. Mr. White discussed the subject of podcast guidance, whether or not it would be helpful to have from this committee and acknowledged that the committee may be behind the times to create at this point because groups and individuals who wish to do podcasts are already doing them without this guidance and mentioned this item can be moved to Old Business on a future agenda.
13. Due to time constraints, Ms. Ratcliff will post information to Basecamp to assigning liaisons to Other Committees and the Regional Communications Chairs and the topic will be revisited during the October meeting. Committees to be assigned liaisons are as follows: Membership Promotion (MP), Chapter Technology Transfer Committee (CTTC), Research Promotion (RP), YEA, Publications, Historical, Technical Activities Committee (TAC), and MTG.AI.
14. Mr. Simonsen asked if anyone had additional items to bring up during the meeting.
 - Ms. Hay noted she is still getting several questions regarding adding / removing individuals from Basecamp and asked what the solution is. Ms. Ratcliff suggested a process for this be placed in the updated guidance the committee is working. At this point, Ms. Ratcliff works with individuals on a one-off basis quickly when they reach out. Mr. Simonsen suggested placing a note about this in the Chapter Notes newsletter, like what ran in June. Ms. Ratcliff will ensure the note is placed in the August Chapter Notes edition. Mr. Roberts mentioned he emailed individuals in Region X and offered to adjust the setting for those who needed it. Ms. Hay suggested potentially this would be something RCCs could assist with.
 - Ms. Hay also asked if the committee would be assigning individuals from the

committee to connect with Regional Communication Chairs (RCCs) as has been done in the past. Mr. Simonsen said it would be, and Ms. Ratcliff will add that to the note she will place in Basecamp.

15. A time and date for the next meeting was discussed and the next meeting will take place Friday, October 10th from 11 AM EDT – 12:30 PM EDT. Ms. Ratcliff will send invitations.
16. Mr. Simonsen adjourned the meeting at 12:35 PM EDT.