



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

2026 ASHRAE Annual Conference Meeting | Austin, TX, USA

JW Marriott Austin, JW - Boardroom - L4

Saturday, June 27 | 11:00 AM–2:00 PM CT

Members Present

Thursten Simonsen

Sandeep Mendiratta

Franco D'Atri

Brad White

Jeanette Hay

David Roberts

Carrie Brown

Members Absent

Waqar Ali Shah

Ana Perez-Bustamante Garcia

Sarah Maston

Guests

Ashish Rakheja (incoming)

Kelly Williams (incoming)

Mohammed Murtaza (incoming)

Anmol Prabhu (incoming)

Maggie Moninski (incoming)

Les Pereira

Kellie Huff

Manan Vora

Buzz Wright

Caoyang Li

Bri Niziolek

Richard Asare

Li Yao

Jason Alphonso

Staff

Joslyn Ratcliff

1. Mr. Simonsen called the meeting to order at 11:01 CDT and read the ASHRAE Value Statement.
2. Ms. Ratcliff took roll call and noted one more individual was needed for quorum, which was achieved after roll call.
3. Mr. Simonsen facilitated an ice breaker in which everyone shared their favorite team from the World Cup.
4. Mr. Simonsen called for a motion to approve the March 6 and April 17 Meeting Minutes. David moved to approve and the meeting minutes were approved with no changes. 5-0-0, CV.
5. Dr. Brown, presented the Leadership presentation to the committee.
6. Mr. Rakheja addressed the committee and suggested Communications Committee could help ASHRAE by providing guidance on AI use to Members Council as ASHRAE continues to use AI, noting that a lot of data is used and stored and this is something the committee can help provide guidance in terms of what is happening at the Members Council level. If the committee needs additional funds for its work, Mr. Rakheja let the committee know he will

support the needs.

7. Mr. Simonsen said it has been great to serve as chair for 2025-26 and provided a chair's report thanking the committee for its work, calling out the additions the committee has had to the Chapter Notes newsletter this year, and the request for more information from CTTC regarding the dynamic planning calendar, and noting that he will cover other items when MBOs are discussed.
8. Mr. Mendiratta thanked the committee during his vice chair's report.
9. Ms. Ratcliff provided a staff report and noted the following:
 - Society would be sending guidelines on Chapter/Region logo use and noted approved logos can be found on Basecamp.
 - A Society Calendar will be launched June 15 and is similar to the application Communications Committee and YEA investigated previously to have a unified calendar across Society.
 - An AI-notetaking tool called Jamie has been approved for limited purposes of taking meeting notes that can assist staff liaisons with minutes.
 - Ms. Hay indicated the Monterrey Chapter may be interested in using at the Chapter level and asked if this would be Society-provided. Ms. Ratcliff indicated it is currently being launched for staff, but she would inquire about future use and also share the usage policy provided to staff with Ms. Hay.
 - Region II and ASHRAE's IT team have been working on a new tool called "Chapter Ops" that will allow chapters to perform various functions of chapter management from one area, provided by ASHRAE. The tool was shown to the committee on-screen and various feedback and questions provided as follows:
 - Will Regions also be able to use this, or is it intended solely for Chapters?
 - For PAOE, is it simply reading the PAOE, or will this be the new place to enter?
 - How does this overlap with Basecamp in terms of the storage, calendar, and minutes. Would a guideline be helpful on which platform does what?
 - Email history is helpful as well as the ability to have email lists within the tool.
 - Very great that this connects to netforum.
 - Presume it will base what the logged in user can see based on their chapter position, like reports do today.
 - Events were positively received as well as the survey capability, noting it would be great for chapters not to have to rely on various external services (i.e. WildApricot, Star Chapter, EventBrite, etc.)
 - Is it possible to embed information from within this tool within their chapter websites?
 - How / will Student Activities and Research Promotion be included?
 - Is there opportunity for administration of H&A?
 - Ms. Hay asked if there would be value in a guideline from the committee on AI use for content creation. Several examples were discussed, and the committee agreed that developing such guidance could be a worthwhile MBO for 2026-27. Mr. Roberts

suggested the ASHRAE brand guide be updated in regard to AI use.

- Ms. Hay suggested TikTok be included in the social media guidance from Communications Committee. Mr. Prabhu asked if Society could start an official WhatsApp Channel; Ms. Ratcliff said ASHRAE's social media coordinator is currently researching this to be discussed by the Marketing Department following the conference.
- Mr. Prabhu noted issues within his Region with ASHRAE 365 on the iPad and Ms. Ratcliff will connect him with the staff person responsible for ASHRAE 365.

10. Reports from Liaisons to Other Committees

- Membership Promotion (MP) – Mr. White
 - PAOE motion - The committee was informed about the motion regarding the how / when PAOE points are assigned and RCCs in the meeting were asked if they had issues with Chapter Chairs entering incorrect data. Mr. Murtaza noted that he'd seen issues in his region and would support the motion.
 - Membership growth of 2.5% has been noted.
 - The committee is discussing renaming the hardship model so it's less tied directly to financial hardship, putting in separate in terms of maternity/paternity.
- Chapter Technology Transfer (CTTC) – Mr. Mendiratta
 - CTTC asked for more information regarding the Dynamic Planning Calendar as well as an interface for events; Mr. Mendiratta will follow up as needed; however believes the new Chapter Ops tool may make the request obsolete.
 - They'd like to know how they can better promote Tech Hour and they will send an email to him that he'll share with the committee so they can help.
- Research Promotion (RP) – Mr. Roberts
 - They are actively stepping up their marketing campaign, and they have a new Canva template to assist with this.
 - They are very excited about the Chapter Ops tool and are coming up with ideas for usage. It is noted that the group thought Communications Committee was part of this project (although the committee was not involved.)
- YEA – Ms. Hay
 - Presented the Cross Chapter communications tool to YEA, who loved the tool. They provided feedback regarding the Society Year and asked if that could be added. They may also plan to mention the tool in their RVC presentations.
 - YEA has a TC bingo card from YEA. The card helps YEA members connect with TCs, see relevant meetings and network at ASHRAE conferences.
 - YEA is interested in assistance from Communications Committee in promoting their events.
- Publications – Ms. Pérez-Bustamante Garcia (via email ahead of the conference)
 - Publications Committee members will be added to the ASHRAE Chapter

Notes Distribution list moving forward.

- Historical - D'Atri
 - Meets Sunday; no report at the time of the meeting.
- Technical Activities Committee (TAC) - D'Atri
 - Ahead of the conference, the committee was made aware that TAC may seek assistance from Communications Committee regarding email aliases, however it did not come up during the meeting.
 - Training on the TC websites was discussed, and it was noted that Communications Committee provided extensive training when they collaborated with TAC on this initial effort. Since moving from Communications Committee to be maintained between TAC and ASHRAE IT-staff, training has been handled outside of Communications Committee. The suggestion was made for the Committee to host an Office Hour or create new guidance on updating the TC websites. Ms. Ratcliff will provide contact information for TAC to Mr. D'Atri, Mr. Simonsen, and Ms. Hay to follow-up.
- MTG. GAI - Brad White
 - Meets Tuesday; no report at the time of the meeting.

11. MBOs were reviewed and updated. Final 2025-26 MBOs will be reported to Members Council and are available on Basecamp.

12. MBOs were discussed and updated 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.
Next step: MBO 100% Complete
- **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.
Next step: Mr. White moved and Mr. Roberts seconded to approve the changes to the Basecamp documentation Ms. Ratcliff provided. 6-0-1, Motion passes and Ms. Ratcliff will post the updates live online. **MBO 100% Complete**
- **MBO #3** - Explore establishing a Society-level Communications Award – with work from Mr. D'Atri and Ms. Pérez-Bustamante Garcia. The motion has been sent to Honors & Awards Committee for their consideration. If H&A passes, it will move forward for approval by Members Council.
Next step: MBO 100% Complete
- **MBO #4** - Create curriculum for virtual training.
Next step: The group decided on two sessions, with dates and times for the trainings as follows:

Session I - Tuesday, September 15th from 10 AM – 1 PM

Session II - Tuesday, September 23 from 10 AM – 1 PM

The modules were reviewed and a small group to be led by Mr. D'Atri was formed to finalize the dates/times, complete the training content and prepare the details to be ready for the trainings. Group members include Franco D'Atri Thursten Simonsen, David Roberts, Kelly Williams and Joslyn Ratcliff. The group will meet on July 2, 2026.

- [List of modules and to whom they are assigned is on Basecamp.](#)

- **MBO #5** - Update WordPress theme and create plan for updating Wix Template.
Next step: Mr. Roberts will send the completed Wix template to Ms. Ratcliff to replace the existing template. Ms. Ratcliff to get time and cost to translate the WordPress theme, once completed, into Spanish. Mr. Roberts to check with Ms. Pérez-Bustamante Garcia regarding translating the Wix template into Spanish. Ms. Ratcliff posted to Basecamp additional information from ShiftWeb regarding taking the changes to the WordPress template live, Ms. Ratcliff will receive comments until July 1, then will ask the vendor to complete.
- **MBO #6** - Explore and report on needs/wants and potential capabilities of AI could be used for ASHRAE Communications needs.

Next step: Ms. Ratcliff to communicate with Mr. Simonsen regarding potential MBO opportunities for 2026-27.

13. Mr. Simonsen invited anyone in the meeting to bring up any additional business:

- Ms. Williams suggested the Cross Chapter Communication tool be included in the Centralized Training, perhaps as part of the Operations module. Ms. Hay completed this module on Cross Chapter Communication and uploaded to Basecamp prior to Austin, so it is already complete.
- Mr. Murtaza suggested communication from Communications Committee be shared with the Regional Communication Chairs, so they can share information.

14. Next meeting – Mr. Simonsen suggested meeting three times between the Annual and Winter Conferences and three times between Winter and Annual, with the first meeting of SY 2026-27 being in late August or early September. Mid-days on Friday mornings work well for the group and Ms. Ratcliff will send out a poll to gauge availability.

15. Mr. Simonsen called for motion to adjourn. Ms. Hay moved and the meeting was adjourned at 2:02 PM CDT. The meeting was followed by an in-person Office Hour.