

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS****MINUTES OF THE MEETING****January 4, 2024**

The meeting was conducted remotely via Zoom and with in-person attendance at Station 31.
1231 Franz St SE, Lacey, WA 98516

Present:	Present (Virtual):	Excused:
Commissioner Kirkbride Commissioner Roberts Commissioner Hetzler Commissioner Gamble	Commissioner Kelling	

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Roberts called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM, followed with a salute to our Nation's Flag.

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Gamble
Second: Commissioner Kirkbride
Carried: Unanimous

III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

IV. PROMOTION, SWEARING AND RECOGNITION CEREMONY

- A. Oath of Commissioner Office – Commissioner Liberty Hetzler
- B. New Members

The new finance director, Brandon Kirkwood, was introduced.
Heather Patti was also introduced.

V. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Draft minutes of the December 21st, 2023, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.
- B. Warrants (AP 01A 2023):
 - General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5308 through 5313; checks numbered 23787 through 23795 for a total amount of \$66,744.28.
 - Capital Projects Fund 301: check number 23796 for a total amount of \$32,072.55.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Hetzler
Carried: Unanimous

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Thurston County Medic One
No report; the next meeting is on January 17th. There is an EMS Comprehensive Plan meeting on the same day which is going to be rescheduled.

- B. Thurston 9-1-1 Communications (TCOMM)

Commissioner Roberts reported from the January 3rd meeting:

- The financial report from November 2023: revenue is higher and expenditure is lower. Sales tax was at 2.35% over what it was in 2022. The executive director's report discussed the TCERN radio. JBLM is in the final review stages. The lawyer for JBLM will approve the contract, and it will then go to the garrison commander. Then it goes to the Army Corps of Engineers to sign off on it.
- Fire Station 82: waiting for Motorola to tweak the contract. There were a few things that they needed to have done. That is expected to be done soon, after which the county can provide the building permit.
- Staffing for TCOMM has been an issue. They held five new academies this year. By mid-January, they will be down by only one position. Some of the vacancies were not necessarily due to people leaving but due to promotions or to people going on extended FMLA.
- There needs to be a backup system for the battery in case of loss of power. To rent it would cost \$40,000; to buy it would cost \$52,000. At the last meeting in 2023, it was approved for the executive director to look into purchasing it, as long as it can be used for the long term. The new battery was purchased.

- Moving ahead with the purchase of a new phone system. There were three site visits in three different states to look at phone systems. In February they will be presenting recommendations for a new phone system.
- The next meeting will take place on February 7th.

C. City/District Liaison

Chief Brooks reported that the next standing meeting is scheduled for February 20th but is looking into whether moving it to sooner would be possible. There will be a change in chair and vice chair at the next meeting.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

Commissioner Kelling reported:

- Chief Brooks was on the program for the December meeting. He briefed a couple of the legislative priorities for the State Fire Chiefs Association, the priority being the tax increment funding and the efforts to get that updated or at least modified or allow for allowances by the counties for the fire districts.
- There are reorganizations going on within the State Fire Marshal's office. Commissioner Kelling asked Chief Brooks if there was an update on whether that report was ever published. It was supposed to have been published to the legislatures. Chief Brooks reported that the Department of Commerce was the author, and it is now at OFM for final review and a final draft has not been seen yet.
- There is a joint legislative day between the state chiefs and commissioners on January 23rd.
- Commissioner Gerald Bickett is relinquishing his Region 7 responsibilities later this month. John Limbo from South Pierce Fire & Rescue is taking over. He has been attending the last couple of fire commissioner meetings. They are looking for program ideas for this fiscal year. One idea under discussion is to invite the new MultiCare to give a presentation and/or conduct a meeting at the new MultiCare center.
- The new officer positions: Commissioner Dan Bivens from South Bay is the new president. The vice president is Commissioner McMaster. The secretary treasurer remains Gerry Bickett until a replacement can be nominated and installed. Trustees remain John Ricks and Len Albert. Commissioner Steve Slater is the new trustee from Southeast Thurston.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council

No report; the next meeting is on January 12th.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- The holiday season wrapped up with the Santa appearances and the eight nights out in the community. There was a culminating event at Panorama on

December 21st. Community outreach is now on a momentary break after the holidays.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Cerovski shared:

- The hygiene trailer arrived on December 29th. Very happy with it so far. Photos were shared.
- Regarding the VRF: doing the final sewer and power infrastructure completions. There will be parking lot work done in the next couple of weeks, with the hope of connecting to the city sanitary sewer by the end of the month.
- Word was received this week from the build for the incident support unit project: anticipating receiving a final spec and bid for that project within the next week in order to begin the process of requesting a purchase of that box for the chassis that was already purchased.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. No items.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Policy review and update for Military Leave (P-512.1.) Presentation and Board Action.

The policy was reviewed. Of note, it is asked that if there is a change of military orders, within five days the member needs to notify the district of that change. There was also a change to identify what monthly accruals means to the member, referring to their annual and sick leave accruals that they receive on a monthly basis. The last change is regarding when members are deployed for more than 90 consecutive days. This is consistent with other policies, where if the member is not working for 90 days, there is a cessation or stop of their awarded premium pays that they would receive normally. This is standard in the labor agreement.

The only item that was not addressed: there was a question about adding Peace Corps deployments or any kind of federal deployment for public health or safety. It is felt that those are not in the spirit of what the military leave policy provides. There are other methods for providing that deployment capability.

Chief Brooks reported that regarding step increases, there was an issue in looking with the plans administrator for the health insurance. It was a surprise to learn that LFD3 is compelled to remove members who are deployed for military service from health insurance coverage as a covered district member. The plan administrator has reported that this means the member is afforded COBRA rights during their deployment. It was negotiated with the union that the member would only pay a \$10 administrative fee to utilize COBRA. It was agreed with labor management that LFD3 will continue to pay the premiums when COBRA is utilized.

There was lengthy discussion about various changes in the language of the policy. The goal is to make these changes as quickly as possible ahead of an upcoming deployment expected next week.

MOTION: To adopt the military leave policy identified as P-512.1.D with the addition of the language that was presented today.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride

Second: Commissioner Gamble

Carried: Unanimous

Chief Cerovski added that the military deployment form was adjusted. It simplifies the process and streamlines its flow through the organization. This is in concert with the policy as written.

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Brooks reported:

- Thank you to the board and the staff for accommodating absences at the previous meeting.
- Getting ready to begin the annual report. It was a record year with over 17,000 distinct dispatches for the first time. Chief Cerovski reported that 75% of incidents were rescue and EMS, which is consistent with years prior. In speaking with Director Gorman of Support Services, it is believed that the work of support services results in the gap in the rise of incidents. The national average of increase of incidents is around 4%, and LFD3 was only at 1% this year. They are working on a plan to better document the work that they do as if it is an incident and to code it as such so that better data can be obtained.
- Beginning on January 8th, there will be 12 new firefighters joining. There are 11 new career members and 1 joining through the WorkEx program with the military partnership. Working through the challenges of moving 36 recruits as well as instructors around. There may be a potential partnership with North Thurston Public Schools to utilize a school bus. There will be 26 or 27 in the EMT class as not everyone needed the EMT training, and the full 36 recruits will be starting in February.
- The VRF is taking shape. At some point in the future, there will be a meeting held there or a tour, as well as a ribbon cutting when it is completing.
- Chief Schmidt shared that a resident at Panorama City wrote a letter. This individual had invited a 92-year-old friend to come over and help put up her tree, and while there, he suffered a fall and a medical emergency. Engine 31 responded. She wrote a lot of specifics about the situation. He recovered well and was transported by Olympic Ambulance. She was most impressed that the Engine 31 crew took it upon themselves to finish the tree work for her. She said that it was truly a gift. They also drove her friend's vehicle back to his home so that it would be there when he recovered.
- Chief Brooks reported that the legislative day is on the 23rd. A registration link should have been received.
- Director Huff's retirement send-off will take place on the 31st from 11:30 to 1:30. Invitations will be sent out.

- Chief Brooks reported that the year in review document is available and that the commissioners are welcome to review it and make their comments or edits.

X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kirkbride – welcome to a new year. The development and adoption of the military leave policy is significant. It is a major milestone to be able to memorialize this and come up with a fair policy for deployed members. Welcome to the new finance director.

Commissioner Gamble – happy new year to everyone. The correspondence that was shared was a great example of the great things that the members are doing in the community. Regarding the military leave policy, the efforts being made to keep them on the insurance while they are gone says a lot about how much care and support there is within the district.

Commissioner Hetzler – for clarification, when is a new chair selected? It was replied that this will take place at the last meeting in January (the next meeting). Commissioner Roberts asked if the policy could be sent out again for the commissioners to review.

Commissioner Kelling – echoing what Commissioner Gamble said, good work to the staff on their work on the military leave policy and ensuring that members can stay on the insurance plan. Welcome to the new finance director.

Commissioner Roberts – happy new year to everyone. Encouragement for everyone to review, in a timely fashion, the year in review that the chief prepared so that comments can be ready at the next meeting. Then an executive session can take place at the next meeting.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

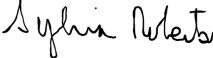
XII. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:22 PM.

***Next Regular Meeting: January 18th, 2024 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.***

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Chair

Commissioner

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Commissioner

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Vice Chair

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Commissioner

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ATTEST: District Secretary