

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

January 8th, 2026

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 Kelling Commissioner Kirkbride Commissioner Roberts Commissioner Hetzler Commissioner Gamble		

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Kelling
Second: Commissioner Roberts
Carried: Unanimous

IV. MEMBER RECOGNITION

Commissioner Melissa Gamble's five-year pin.

V. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Draft minutes of the December 18, 2025, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.
- B. Draft minutes of the December 29, 2025, Board of Fire Commissioners Special Meeting.
- C. Warrants (AP 01A 2026):
 - General Fund 001 (Acct #6630):
 - EFT numbered 5710; checks numbered 24696 through 24704 for a total amount of \$126,295.36.

- January 2026: EFTs numbered 5711 through 5713; checks numbered 24710 through 24717 for a total amount of \$27,758.77.
- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103:
 - December 2025: EFT numbered 5709; check numbered 24705 for a total amount of \$665,202.04.
 - January 2026: EFT numbered 5714 for a total amount of \$8,431.88.
- Capital Projects Fund 301: Checks numbered 24706 through 24707 for a total amount of \$17,042.68.
- 307-2017B Capital Projects Fund: checks numbered 24708 through 24709 for a total amount of \$101,106.82.

D. Payroll 12B-2025 in the amount of \$721,808.90.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride

Second: Commissioner Gamble

Carried: Unanimous

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

No report; the next meeting will take place on January 22nd.

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

Commissioner Roberts reported from the January 7th meeting:

- Financially, things are looking good. Sales tax continues to be collected above budget, and expenditures continue to be below budget.
- The executive report from the director included the fact that the site was completed with Motorola at the Dupont radio site. This is a big accomplishment, as it has taken four years to get this done.
- The subscriber radio programming update is in progress. There are 2,080 radios scheduled for update, and they have already completed almost 1,500.
- The TCERN core upgrade project is complete. There were no issues.
- Regarding the new phone system: the conversion went really well. The minor issues that remain are not ones that will affect calls.
- Staffing is going well. They had interviews for the first academy, which will start in February. There are five vacancies, and they are hoping to get them filled this year.
- There was a glitch with TCOMM and the WSRB that affected South Bay. Commissioner Roberts inquired of Chief Schmidt whether it also affected LFD3.
 - Chief Schmidt responded that South Bay was going through their WSRB rating and they got their ratings back around TCOMM because it is a component of the overall summary. It sounds like they got a lower rating than other partners, which led to

questioning WSRB. Then they went to TCOMM and asked Director Hill, and she reached out to WSRB. It turns out that there have been improvements at TCOMM since they were last rated. TCOMM is only rated every five years, and they are on the same cycle as Olympia Fire, since they are in the city of Olympia. When LFD3 had their recent WSRB rating, the score was likely lower in TCOMM because the improvements there had not been recognized. Director Hill was able to do the work with WSRB in the background and she recommended that LFD3 reach out directly and ask for them to look at this.

- Commissioner Hetzler asked for clarification on the rating cycle for WSRB with LFD3. Chief Schmidt responded that it is every five to seven years.
- Chief Schmidt also reported that a reevaluation can be requested as improvements are made.
- Commissioner Roberts provided the commissioners with a copy of the plan for TCOMM, which was approved by the committee.

C. City/District Liaison

Commissioner Hetzler reported that the next meeting is scheduled for January 15th and that the date will be confirmed.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

No report; the next meeting is on January 20th. They will be taking nominations for the secretary and treasurer positions.

- Commissioner Kelling recommended that the commissioners look at the Washington Fire Chiefs legislative page for the 2026 Legislative Priorities. The legislative day this year is on January 29th.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council

No report; the next meeting is on January 9th. The agenda includes:

- Salmon recovery update for 2026.
- A federal priorities and federal reauthorization process for 2026.
- There will be selection of their chair and vice chair and second vice chair.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Schmidt has asked Chris DeBell to provide the Community Outreach report going forward. Chris DeBell reported:

- Since the last meeting, the Santa Mobile concluded on the 22nd with completion of 7 of the 8 nights. One was canceled due to weather. There was great feedback from the community.
- There have been four car seat fittings and a couple of walk-in tours since the last meeting.
- It has been quieter over the holidays, but an uptick is expected now that the holidays are over. There are things coming up in the spring with the city to be involved with.

- The bimonthly Community Dispatch newsletter is getting a refresh. Multimedia Specialist, Tiffany, is taking on that task and will be the lead on that going forward.
- The latest episode of the documentaries by Bill Lange was released earlier today. The next episode will drop on January 22nd and will be the first of a three-part series on the lateral academy.

G. Operations and Logistics

Chief Patti reported:

- There have been no major or noteworthy incidents since the last meeting.
- Regarding apparatus: currently waiting for the delivery of a lot of the mounts and electronic equipment to get the outfitting started and completed for the new aid units, 31 and 33. It will probably be the beginning of February before those begin service.
- Regarding the new engine: it is now in Station 31. The apparatus committee will start looking over the rig and start looking for placement locations for items such as box lights, etc., to reconfigure the cab and ensure that equipment is in the most accessible and beneficial places. After the meeting, the commissioners are welcome to come look at the rig.
- Recognition of AC Frost and the apparatus committee on this project. This has been a long road, and their hard work is much appreciated. The feedback on the rig has been very positive today.
- The new medic units, Medic 3 and Medic 6 and Medic 2, are anticipated to be placed in service at the end of the month. Medic 3 and Medic 6 are scheduled to be switched out and placed in service on the 27th. Medic 2 will be placed in service on the 28th.
- The Station 31 sign on the side of the building has been moved to the center of the big wall and is now backlit.

H. Standards and Resilience

Chief Cerovski reported:

- The SSRA 2026 began yesterday. The EMS section started yesterday and runs through February 20th. The fire section begins February 23rd and runs through June 19th. Graduation is planned for June 20th, 2026.
- About 900 hours of instruction are anticipated for Firefighter 1 and Firefighter 2, hazardous materials awareness and operations, EMT basic, wildland red card, NIMS introductory training, and a host of other topics.
- Five members from LFD3 will be attending. There are also four members from Southeast Thurston Fire Authority, one from Tumwater, and two from South Bay. There may be two additional who will join the fire section.
- Regarding Community Risk Reduction: inspections have begun in January 2026. There will be a meeting with the City of Lacey on January 13th to provide an update on the planned fee structure and inspection planning schedule.
- The annual meeting with Thurston County Building and Fire Marshall will take place at the end of the month.

- There is a lot of successful work being done in a county-wide fire investigation process to support all of the county fire agencies to do fire investigation.
 - Safety and compliance: Michael Fogarty was onboarded as the newest assistant chief. His swearing in will take place at the next meeting.
 - Accreditation is beginning the process this year. Sometime during Quarter 1, Chief Cerovski will provide an overview to the Board of what accreditation is, what the goals are, and the timeline for that process.
- Preliminary numbers:
- In 2025, there were 17,862 unique documented incident reports.
 - There were 18,188 CAD assignments.
 - There were 24,689 total responses, of which 76% were EMS. The rest were fire alarms, service calls, rescues, etc.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. ILA with EOFD

Board Discussion & Possible Action

Chief Schmidt reported:

- The EOFD board had a meeting today and the overall impression of the ILA with the changes that have been made is positive.
- The opportunity was given for the commissioners to raise any questions or make comments.
 - Commissioner Kelling commended Chief Schmidt and the staff on the approach taken towards this situation. One administrative suggestion: in Section 2.2.8, Public Outreach is referenced, but then in 3.8, it is called Community Outreach. The suggestion would be to use common terminology across the document. The reference in 3.13 to Section 3.11 needs to be verified.
 - Commissioner Kirkbride echoed the positive comments made by Commissioner Kelling. It is commendable that the fire districts can work together in this way. Thanks to EOFD and to Commissioner Stan Moon for reaching out to LFD3.
 - Chief Schmidt thanked the local and E-board members. There is potential for a lot of concern between both work forces. They have gone above and beyond and have been very helpful.
- Commissioner Hetzler stated that, with the minor change pointed out by Commissioner Kelling, that the motion can be entertained to approve the ILA.
- Chief Schmidt mentioned that the ILA was signed (with ink) at the EOFD meeting today, so if changes are now made, there may be a need to reach out to the board for an Adobe signature.

MOTION: To approve the Interlocal Agreement for services between and by Thurston County Fire Protection District Number 6, commonly referred to as East Olympia Fire District 6, and Thurston County Fire Protection District 3, commonly referred to as Lacey Fire District 3, to undertake a variety of support services for Fire District 6.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Roberts
Carried: Unanimous

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Board Secretary Appointment Board Discussion & Action

Chief Schmidt reported:

- Due to recent changes in Chief Cerovski's roles and responsibilities, staff recommends that he be relieved of the role of Board Secretary. Staff further recommends that the Board of Fire Commissioners take action to appoint Executive Assistant Chris DeBell as the secretary of record, in accordance with the district policy and applicable law.
- Executive Assistant DeBell would be required to take an oath for this position, administered by a notary. The available notary would be willing to administer the oath in office if acceptable to the Board of Fire Commissioners.

MOTION: To approve the appointment of Executive Assistant Chris DeBell to the role of Board Secretary, in accordance with district policy and applicable law.

Motion: Commissioner Gamble
Second: Commissioner Kelling
Carried: Unanimous

B. Selection of the Board Chair and Vice Chair Board Discussion & Action

Commissioner Kelling presented:

- The established procedure for selection of the board chair and vice chair was reviewed.
- The recommendation was made, and clarified by Commissioner Kirkbride, that there be an open position rather than the current rotation system.
- Various ideas were discussed for selection of the board chair and vice chair. It was agreed that commissioners should have the option of declining when it is their turn on the rotation.
- There was also discussion of whether an appointment would be for one year or two years.
- Commissioner Hetzler suggested that at the next meeting, it be decided whether to continue the current rotation system or to suspend this rule and have the year to decide how to make changes going forward.
- No action was taken at this time.

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Schmidt reported:

- Chris DeBell sent out an invite to the chamber lunch next week on the 14th. The commissioners are encouraged to attend.
- A letter was received from the Elections Division for Thurston County. From the 2025 elections, which was two commissioners' positions, an invoice was received for \$71,000. Frustratingly, although it was a November election, the postmark was not until December 31st. The ability to pay out of the 2025 budget is not possible. There was not the expectation of having commissioners running this year, so \$60,000 was budgeted for 2026. Therefore, there will be an overage in that area of the budget.
- As Chris DeBell mentioned, a new film from Bill Lange is releasing today. There has been a huge improvement in social media engagement from the community.
- Thanks to the battalion chiefs and members: the battalion chiefs got together to look into an affordable way to do officer development. Today Chief Hulse did a presentation and education series for the members for four hours. About 40 members took part in person and via Zoom. There are seven more scheduled between the battalion chiefs and other key leaders in the agency. The chiefs are preparing this in their down time, and the members are attending while off duty on their own time.
- Chief Schmidt is speaking tomorrow for the Lacey Chamber's Government Affair Committee.
- As Chief Patti mentioned, medic units will be delivered on the 27th and 28th. Medic One has asked to do a ceremony, so there will be two ceremonies on the 27th for Medic 3 and 6 and then again on the 28th.
- There has been a lot of work done with HR on the ILA. In the future, Director Toy will be asked to come and provide an update on everything that has been going on from their end.

X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kelling – the Chief's 2025 Year in Review was excellent. Very proud of the team's accomplishments. Congratulations to Chief Schmidt for completing the first year in this position and for the audit that was undertaken and for the organizational redesign. Congratulations to the deputy chiefs and the chief financial officer and the teams they lead. Pursuing accreditation is another huge step. Very proud to be a part of this organization.

Commissioner Roberts – thanks to everyone for their leadership and their unselfish approach to the Interlocal Agreement. This is a clear example of the LFD3 way. It is wonderful to hear from all the different divisions. A big thank you to Chief Schmidt for an amazing year and all that has been accomplished.

Commissioner Gamble – congratulations to the chief on a successful year. The ILA is impressive – the speed with which it has been undertaken, the communication. The new format of the meeting agenda is appreciated with the

different reports (operations and logistics, standards and resilience). Thank you for the recognition this evening.

Commissioner Kirkbride – thanks to the Board of Fire Commissioners of East Olympia for reaching out and trusting their nextdoor neighbor to help them out. Congratulations to the LFD3 Board of Fire Commissioners. The decision to appoint Chief Schmidt was the right one. The Board and the District has accomplished wonderful things in 2025. Thanks to the Chief for being in her leadership position and continuing the culture of Lacey Fire District 3.

Commissioner Hetzler – nothing more to add.

XI. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Correspondence

Chief Schimdt reported that a variety of thank-you's have been received from citizens.

XII. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

- EOFD Commissioner Brandon Faust commented with appreciation for all of the kind comments. District 6 has been in a tough spot, and it has been frustrating to have so much uncertainty. Much appreciation for the work that LFD3 is doing to help. Thank you from the EOFD6 Board.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:34 PM.

***Next Regular Meeting: January 22nd, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.***



Liberty Hetzler (02/07/2026 20:57:21 PST)

Chair



Frank Kirkbride (02/15/2026 14:32:08 CST)

Vice Chair



Melissa Gamble (02/07/2026 12:10:13 PST)

Commissioner



Julie Roberts (02/07/2026 09:16:01 PST)

Commissioner



Richard Kelling (02/07/2026 14:57:30 PST)

Commissioner



ATTEST: District Secretary

01 08 2026 BoFC Meeting Minutes Final

Final Audit Report

2026-02-15

Created:	2026-02-06 (Pacific Standard Time)
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2026-02-07 - 9:15:12 AM PST
-  Signer sroberts@laceyfire.com entered name at signing as Sylvia Roberts
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2026-02-07 - 8:56:57 PM PST

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2026-02-07 - 8:57:19 PM PST

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Signature Date: 2026-02-07 - 8:57:21 PM PST - Time Source: server

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2026-02-15 - 12:30:43 PM PST

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2026-02-15 - 12:32:06 PM PST

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Signature Date: 2026-02-15 - 12:32:08 PM PST - Time Source: server

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