THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

March 5, 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 Roberts Commissioner Hetzler Commissioner Kirkbride	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

Staff added an agenda item under New Business: ICE Activity on District Property.

MOTION: To approve the agenda as amended.
Motion: Commissioner Kelling
Second: Commissioner Roberts
Carried: Unanimous

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft minutes of the February 19, 2026, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

B. Warrants (AP 3A 2026):

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5746 through 5749; checks numbered 24790 through 24797 for a total amount of $46,088.67.
- Donations Fund 101: check number 24798 for a total amount of $113.09.
- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: EFTs numbered 5750 through 5752; checks numbered 24799 through 24800 for a total amount of $10,069.96.

C. Payroll 2B-2026 in the amount of $787,917.46.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.
Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Kelling
Carried: Unanimous

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One
Commissioner Kirkbride reported from the most recent meeting:

- The chairman for the last couple of years, Commissioner Stan Moon from East Olympia, chose to retire after 54 years of fire service.
- The chair and the vice chair serve two-year terms, which are currently halfway through.
- Lenny Greenstein was nominated and elected as the chair through the end of the term. A new vice chair was then elected: Tom Carroll.
- There was one medic one that no district in the county wanted. After offering it to all of the districts in the county, it will then be offered to all of the first districts and departments within the West region. Commissioner Kirkbride was unsure of what the specific issues are with this unit, but it has been a training unit at Medic One and has not been in service for a long time.
- Action was taken on min max requirements. We adopted where we are today on that requirement. The same thing happened at West Region yesterday.
- Yesterday morning there was a West Region meeting. There were a couple of interesting items. There are a number of small grants given to a variety of organizations, one of which is with an organization in Pierce County on fall prevention. They shared their stats at the West Region meeting. They are doing a great job of working with people, providing education, and assessing people's homes.
- When there is a BLS call to pick up an individual with mental issues or problems, they are taken to the hospital ER and they are then transferred to the mental health hospital. There was a report from the medical program director from Lewis County regarding how they are now transporting directly to mental health. The director of Thurston Medic One is planning a call to the MPD in Lewis County to find out more about how they are able to do this and how it can be replicated locally.
- There is currently no executive director, although they are interviewing and vetting a candidate right now.
- The next meeting will take place on June 3rd.

B. Thurston 9-1-1 Communications (TCOMM)
Commissioner Roberts shared from the March 4th meeting:

- The employee of the year for TCOMM, Dispatcher Angela Larson, was recognized.

- At the last meeting, there was conversation about the TCOMM building being sold. It has now been clarified that there is no intension of selling the building.
- As far as finances, slightly below with sales tax compared to the previous month, but still within budget. Expenditures are below budget. Sales tax is still 2.8% over where it was a year ago.
- The executive director report included the fact that TCERN is finished. The contract with Motorola will end on March 31st. There are a few minor things that need to be taken care of before then. The DuPont radio site is up and operational. The old shelter is gone and a new shelter is in place.
- The new phone system, Central Square, is up and running, and there have been no issues with it thus far.
- Staffing is going amazingly well and is very close to being fully staffed. The first academy of 2026 started on February 23rd. There are two people in it. Interviews are being scheduled for the next one, and there are currently 34 applicants (the highest number of applicants to date).
- The calendar meetings for the year were approved. They are staying the same, meeting on the first Wednesday of every month with one exception: the October meeting takes place in the end of September to meet budget constraints.
- The next meeting will take place on April 1st.

C. City/District Liaison
No report; the next meeting is scheduled for March 19th.

D. LFD3/EOFD ILA Committee
Commissioner Hetzler reported:
- There was a meeting last week. Chief Financial Officer Kirkwood has created a time tracking report, which is great for monitoring the time used for EOFD. This will help determine whether initial expectations for time expenditures are being met.
- Deputy Chief Patti will share more later, but of note, he has done sit-downs with the four lieutenants there and has had really positive feedback. In particular, they were appreciative of how quickly issues are being acknowledged and addressed.
- Alesa, the office administrator, is very pleased with the support she has been receiving. She has been picking things up very quickly, despite only starting at the beginning of this year.

E. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association
The next meeting will take place on March 17th. Commissioner Kelling will attend the meeting in Commissioner Gamble's place.

F. Thurston Regional Planning Council
The next meeting will take place tomorrow. Commissioner Kelling pointed out three agenda items of note:

- The comprehensive plan round up will take place. All municipalities and a number of other agencies and organizations across the county, who should have completed their comprehensive plans last year. The implications of those plans will be reviewed.
- There will be discussion of Intercity Transit's Martin Way/Duterow Road roundabout, which is still in the early phases.
- There will be a public participation plan update for this year.

G. Community Outreach
Chris DeBell reported:

- There have been several bicycle helmet fittings and car seat installations.
- Requests are starting to come in for spring and summer activities and events. Taylor is filtering those, and they are now in the review and coordination process.
- Upcoming events include the Lacey Cultural Fair at St. Martins. LFD3 will have a booth there.
- The CPR7 program is firing up again. There is a goal of formalizing the process. Currently scheduled in March for three schools with four dates. Part of the process includes moving from a few operations personnel to the MSO office. With support of Kristina, scheduling is now happening through an online process. It has been changed to March and November, with the goal of getting more participation overall from the teachers. The formalization of the process also enables assistance from Medic One to cover overtime staffing costs.
- On the social media front: the overview of the ILA video received almost 5,500 views. The dog rescue post was 1,600. The Gone In 60 Seconds video has over 2,000 views. Coverage of the Secondhand Rose fire had almost 2,000 reactions and over 200 comments on Facebook.
- Bill Lange's next documentary features the district under the leadership of Chief Schmidt. That will either be posted later tonight or tomorrow.

H. Operations and Logistics
Chief Schmidt shared:

- There have been a couple of big events. On February 23rd, there was a fire at Secondhand Rose. Everything at the scene went very well. Work done over the past couple of years proved very helpful, including have a second battalion, opening Station 32 and having that available, expanding the administrative staff for capacity to run normal operations during the event, etc.
- The Operations teams has looked specifically at that area in the past because of the limited water supply and what it might look like to protect the surrounding neighbors. The entire situation went as well as it possibly could have.
- The outreach back from the community was not only supportive of the district but also of the families and neighbors involved and was a great testament to the community.

- The crews were able to work mutual aid with South Bay on a call on which they rescued a dog, Boone, from a ravine 60 feet down.
- Shortly after that, there was another dog rescue for a dog named Manny who went through a crawlspace hole and was retrieved by crews.

Chief Patti reported:

- With regard to East Olympia operations, there have not been any high profile calls in the last several weeks.
- On the logistics side: Aid 33 is currently at the warehouse getting stocked up. It is getting ready to go into service and should be ready in the next week or two. Aid 31 is done with its upfitting and will be next to be outfitted and next to go into service.
- After those units are in service, work will begin on surplussing the old Aid 31.
- Engine 31 continues to be on standby for its final upfitting at the shop.
- As was mentioned by Commissioner Hetzler, all the meetings were completed with the lieutenants. All four were great meetings and very helpful. It was a good opportunity to get to know them and their perspective on the agency. Starting this month, all of the Lacey divisions are meeting with staff. There will be three meetings per division.
- Morale is at an all-time high for the EOFD teams.
- Chief Schmidt added that Chief Carson has been onboarded. His swearing in will be at the next meeting.

I. Standards and Resilience

Chief Cerovski shared:

- The South Sound Recruit Academy is in week two of the fire section. There has been movement on the fire training grounds with PPE basics, work with SCBAs and learning about search and rescue. So far there have been 20 instructors engaged from participant agencies to assist in the instruction of the SSRA.
- The division continues to support partners at the East Olympia Fire District with their training center facility and live fire training support and management. They have asked our division to help them with a couple of items, and help has been given with refreshing their systems.
- The closeout of the EMS section of the SSRA is wrapping up. Final national registry tests are taking place. There has been successful completion by all members.
- Community Risk Reduction: there has been a lot of talk about the business safety inspector program. A big focus in the last couple of weeks has been on the fire investigations program led by Chief Roberts. They are taking action to refresh and revise the fire investigations process, providing guidance to existing investigators and seeking out additional staff members who would like to be investigators and providing a training plan for them.
- Safety and Compliance: there was something called AFFF, a foam fire suppressant, on the property. This is something used for certain types of

fire conditions. That product has been deemed quite dangerous due to the chemicals in the makeup of the foam. Work was done with the Department of Ecology to allow them to take possession of that and properly dispose of it.

- Another element that Safety and Compliance is working on is reviewing, revising, and refreshing the exposure, accident, injury, and near miss reporting processes. Currently, the processes are a little bit cumbersome and dependent on email. AC Fogarty, with support from the IT division, has been doing excellent work on creating QR codes and making it easy to log in and complete reporting quickly.
- Work is being done on a third-party evaluation of Station 34. The week of March 16th, there will be a meeting on site with an engineer to do an assessment. The contractor of record will also attend.
- Commissioner Kelling inquired about the foam that was off ramped through DOE and whether there is a backup for that product. Chief Cerovski affirmed that there is a basic Class A foam that does not contain the same dangerous components and that LFD3 has a supply of it.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. ICE Events on District Property
Chief Schmidt reported:

- On Tuesday morning, very early in the day, Chief Schmidt received a phone call from Battalion 34, Chief Crimmins, with news that there were ICE agents in the parking area of Station 34. There was no contact from them to any district personnel. It appeared they were detaining someone from the property across the street where there is construction going on.
- Chief Schmidt and Chief Carson went to Station 34. By the time of arrival, the activities had ceased and the agents had left the grounds. There was a battalion chief meeting already scheduled, and during that meeting, there was discussion of how to proceed immediately if anyone were to come across that activity at any of the LFD3 stations.
- Executive staff started looking into how to manage the situation. Staff is aware that there was a law enacted in the State of Washington in 2019 known as KWW, Keep Washington Working. That law advises that no state or local agency, including fire districts, may use agency funds, facilities, property, or equipment or personnel to investigate or enforce or assist in surveillance. However, there is not a requirement to adopt policy.
- As a fire district, no policy was adopted specific to managing the KWW law. However, there is a policy in place that talks about how the properties will be utilized and the difference between public and

restricted areas. That policy is believed to meet the intent of the KWW law.

- The recommendation to the commissioning board is that possibly one or more commissioners, alongside with executive staff, could create a work group or a review committee to review the policy and talk about the recent event.
- Some of the other things that need to be communicated properly include the limits on sharing information with any agents or law enforcement outside of normal operations. A lot of this is normal to the members who often work in EMS and have HIPAA rules to follow.
- LFD3 reached out to the state chiefs yesterday, and they also have not come across this particular situation.
- LFD3 also reached out to legal counsel for advice in managing this situation.
- An email will be sent to the Board tomorrow with the contents and specificities of the Keeping Washington Working law, as well as advising that the City of Lacey has adopted their own policy about how the city operates. If appropriate, LFD3 might adopt similar language.
- One citizen did go to a lieutenant at Station 34 yesterday to ask if they were aware of the interaction. That citizen was informed that there had been a report of it taking place but there was no knowledge on the part of district staff that it would be taking place.
- Last night a member's family member reported hearing in the community that perhaps ICE was operating on LFD3 property.
- Staff would like to send an email to all membership to advise them of the event and give some basic operation guidance.
- The goal would be that any necessary policy adjustments would take place by the time of the next meeting.
- Commissioner Roberts inquired if there is a need for both policy and procedures. Chief Schmidt responded in the affirmative.
- Commissioners Hetzler and Roberts volunteered to serve on a committee with staff.

B. Policy Review — Staff Presentation and Board Action
Workspace EV Charging Stations
Chief Cerovski reported:

- The policy being presented is part of the requirement of the agreement with the Department of Commerce for EV charging stations. It has information in there pertaining to the Climate Commitment Act that was adopted in the State of Washington.
- These are workplace charging stations, not intended for the general public.

- These charging systems come with a Wi-Fi connection capability in order to track the use of kilowatt hours and the number of charging experiences at the stations.
- Also included is guidance to the members on how to use the system.
- Members are not charged for this service.
- It has been asked if this is considered a gifting of public funds. In the State of Washington with the Climate Commitment Act, that is not applicable in this case.
- Commissioner Hetzler asked how many charging stations are at each fire station. Chief Cerovski responded that there are two stations at Stations 31, 33, 34, and 35. There are no charging stations at Station 32 or the TEC or the VRF facility.
- Commissioner Kelling inquired if there are any district EVs. Chief Cerovski responded that there are district vehicles that are hybrids but no plug-in vehicles at this time.
- Commissioner Kirkbride shared concerns about spending taxpayer money to power these cars. The grant money is there to put the charging stations in, but the concern is whether the electricity should be provided and whether that is something the car owner should be providing themselves. In response to this, Commissioner Hetzler asked if there is a way to track the expenditures.
- Chief Cerovski responded that there has been tracking from installation to now, and the total burden to the district over an 8 to 9 month period is around $1,100. All of the data is available to show how many charging events have occurred and the average per kilowatt hour price (around $0.11 or $0.12 per kilowatt hour, based on information from PSE).
- Chief Cerovski also stated that it is important to note that part of the Climate Commitment Act is that the workplace charging system be made available to the employees at no charge. This is part of the contract language of the grant with the state.

MOTION: To approve Policy L-1001, Workplace EV Charging Stations.
Motion: Commissioner Kelling
Second: Commissioner Roberts
Carried: with one abstention (Commissioner Kirkbride)

C. Bond Counsel Presentation — Staff and Consultant Jim Nelson

Chief Schmidt reported:

- Thanks to all of the commissioners for hearing the presentation at the last meeting about the bond. Thanks to Commissioner Kirkbride for working with staff this week to go over the presentation and discuss it since he was not present at the last meeting.
- At the last meeting, it was promised that staff would bring in the bond councilman from D.A. Davidson, and as promised, Jim Nelson is present to give a presentation.

Jim Nelson gave a presentation titled Voted Bond Financing Information:

- The bond would require 60% approval or more with 40% validation based on the previous year's November ballot. Normally, this is not an issue.
- Debt capacity calculation: with voter approval, there is approximately $141.2 million of available debt capacity. On a non-voted basis, this number would be $71 million. It is recommended to leave some remaining debt capacity in case of cost overruns.
- A graph was shown of rates for 10-year treasury notes.
- Estimated voted bond payments were displayed. For each $5,000,000 in bonds, the estimated increase in the bond levy rate is approximately 1.3 cents per $1,000 of assessed value. The suggestion was made to look at the long-term needs and what the dollar amount is and then determine the estimated levy rate and the estimated monthly cost. Another key component is determining what the community will support.
- Planning for a voted bond includes facility planning (12 to 24 months), bond issue planning (12 to 24 months), outreach and voter education (6 to 9 months), draft election resolution (6 months), file ballot title with the county (60 days prior to election day), and the election date (February, April, August, November).
- Election and resolution filing dates were shared. For a November 3, 2026, election date, the resolution filing deadline is August 4, 2026. Approximate date ballots are mailed is October 16, 2026.
- An example was presented of a voter education timeline.
- Comments from fire chiefs on preparing for a ballot measure were shared, the most important of which is starting the voter education process six to nine months before the election date.
- The public disclosure commissioner rules were shared.
- An example of a factual brochure was presented.
- Commissioner Kelling asked if the bond rating is increased, what the rate of return would be. Mr. Nelson responded that it is approximately three basis points. The commissioners were referred to page 19 of their handout for additional information.
- Chief Schmidt asked, if the commissioners decide to support a bond, would the workshop at the end of March be a good timeline for beginning the bond process? Mr. Nelson responded in the affirmative.
- Commissioner Hetzler asked if the decision is made today to move forward with this discussion, would the goal be to dig into the numbers during the workshop to give some direction to staff moving forward? Chief Schmidt stated that knowing that the board is supportive of a bond would be helpful over the next month to prepare a proposal. If it is not the board's wish, that would allow staff to step back and focus on other things. No monetary amount needs to be identified today, but knowing the interests of the board would be helpful.
- The members of the board verbalized support with moving forward with a bond proposal.

- Chief Schmidt inquired if the board would be supportive of the staff creating a community advisory group sooner rather than later. This would be helpful to guide the process, especially when it comes to educating the public. The commissioners verbalized support.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Schmidt reported:

- There is an education opportunity for commissioners on June 6th in Chelan. The topics include leadership culture, mental health, and commissioners' roles. Chris DeBell will be sending out an email soon, and anyone who wants to attend should communicate with her.
- Since the last meeting, executive staff and Chris DeBell were able to reach out to nine different HOAs that have planned meetings in LFD3 facilities. All but one of these meetings have been scheduled. LFD3 will be opening the meetings with a brief report on the state of the district. Commissioner Hetzler encouraged those meetings to be placed on the commissioners' calendars as well so that they can attend as able.
- The stair climb team is going on Sunday. Thanks to the board for their donations to the team.
- Several staff members attended the Lacey Chamber luncheon yesterday. City Manager Rick Walk presented on the state of the city.
- A law firm recently reached out to Chief Schmidt. There was a case that centered around EMS response and transport in Thurston County. The outreach to Chief Schmidt was due to the fact that she chaired the transport committee during COVID and it was felt there would be background in understanding the complexities with transport, as well as awareness of the hospitals in Thurston County. Chief Schmidt will be deposed this month as a subject matter expert.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Gamble – it would be appreciated if the bond council presentation can be emailed out to the commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to participate via Zoom.

Commissioner Kelling – to contextualize the statement from the last meeting stating that the Thurston Regional Planning Council does not have decision-making authority – that is not correct. It is an intergovernmental board that does have certain decision-making authority, especially when it comes to resource allocation and policy development. However, they do not have the ability to compel the municipal districts and the like. Tonight, there are lots of good reports. It is good to hear the support is being well-received at East Olympia. The updates on that relationship are appreciated. All of the commissioners are encouraged to follow the link in the newsletter that goes to the 2026 budget and the ClearGov report that Chief Kirkwood presented. There is an amazing amount of information available. All in all, Chief Schmidt is doing a wonderful job. There is a Pierce County Fire Commissioners Association training on April 18th. Commissioner Hetzler mentioned attending last year and finding it very valuable.

Commissioner Roberts – word has gotten out in East Olympia about the ILA and the community is very thankful. A pleasure to see Jim; thank you for the comprehensive information.

Commissioner Kirkbride – thanks to Chief Patti for taking on all the extra work and doing so much. A special thank you to Chief Carlson.

Commissioner Hetzler – in agreement with all the other commissioners' comments. A special thank you to Chief Patti, who is clearly the perfect person for the current role. Just as a reminder, there had been a conversation about a hope for the opportunity for Chief Roberts would come and talk about the work he is doing. Just as a reminder, at the first meeting in April, Commissioner Roberts will be absent, and at the second April meeting, Commissioner Hetzler will be absent.

X. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Correspondence
Chief Schmidt reported:

- A letter was received from a citizen who had to call 911 to their home when her husband fell. The call was upgraded to cardiac arrest. Unfortunately, her husband passed, but she took the time to reach out and thank those who responded for their care.
- There was an email thanking LFD3 for their care of the dogs in the recent calls.
- Someone called in to the front desk with what initially sounded like a complaint, as this person was navigating the death of a family member. They had received a report from public records that might have contained either different language or discrepancies versus a report from the coroner's office. Taylor, who took the call at the front desk, connected with Chief Cerovski, who pulled in Support Services and invited this woman to come in to go over the reports. Today, a voicemail was received from that same woman, thanking staff for their time to sit with her and review the reports. She specifically called out Taylor, Support Services, and Chief Cerovski.

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 7:08 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: March 19th, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.

Liberty Hetzler (04/02/2026 20:05:45 PDT)

Chair

Vice Chair

Melissa Gamble (03/26/2026 20:14:56 PDT)

Commissioner

Sylvia Roberts (03/26/2026 15:56:19 PDT)

Commissioner

Richard Kelling (03/27/2026 18:03:28 PDT)

Commissioner

ATTEST: District Secretary

03 05 2026 BoFC Meeting Minutes Final

Final Audit Report 2026-04-02

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