

**THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE****BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS****MINUTES OF THE MEETING****March 21st, 2024**

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

| <b>Present:</b>                                                                                                       | <b>Present (Virtual):</b> | <b>Excused:</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Commissioner Kirkbride<br>Commissioner Roberts<br>Commissioner Hetzler<br>Commissioner Gamble<br>Commissioner Kelling |                           |                 |

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Kelling 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 Roberts  
Second: Commissioner Gamble  
Carried: Unanimous

**III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT**

None.

**IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Draft minutes of the March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.
- B. Draft minutes of the March 7<sup>th</sup> Board of Volunteer Firefighters Meeting.
- C. Warrants (AP 3B 2024):

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5354 through 5355; checks numbered 23876 through 23888; and draft number 1314 for a total amount of \$130,631.71.
  - Donations Fund 101: Draft number 1315 for a total amount of \$73.27.
  - Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: EFT number 5356; and draft number 1316 for a total amount of \$111.00.
  - 2017B Capital Improvement Project Fund 307: EFTs numbered 5357 through 5360; and check number 23889 for a total amount of \$184,378.01.
- D. Payroll 3B-2024 in the amount of \$629,896.32.

**MOTION:** To approve the consent agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler

Second: Commissioner Kirkbride

Carried: Unanimous

## **V. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. Thurston County Medic One**

Commissioner Kirkbride reported on the March 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the West Region, to which Commissioner Kirkbride is the Thurston EMS Council's representative.

- There was a guest speaker from Thurston County Public Health. She spoke about distributing Narcan. The typical recipients of Narcan include those experiencing homelessness, young people 25 and under, and those who are risk of witnessing an opioid overdose.
- Narcan is expensive, and opioid overdoses are increasing.

Commissioner Kirkbride also reported on the March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- The dates of the meetings will be moved to the fourth Thursday of every month at 1:00 p.m. It will still be both in person and over Zoom.
- A bylaws committee was established to look at the bylaws, which were originally written by three county commissioners. A bylaw proposal has been established and will be voted on at the next meeting. The proposal is to remain with 13 members. There will be a city representative from each of the cities (Tumwater, Olympia, Lacey, and Yelm). Previously, South County mayors had selected somebody to represent South County; now it will be the majors themselves. There will also be three citizens at large, as well as a doctor at large. It is hoped that by moving the date of the meeting, Dr. Fontanilla will be able to attend more meetings. There will also be three fire commissioners. There will be a hospital representative, a travel representative, and a representative of Lacey Fire District 3. There will also be a Thurston Department of Health representative. This should allow for a more dynamic group and will bring in some of the parties who need to be part of the decision-making process for EMS and Thurston County.

- With the new rules, if you have three unexcused absences, you are removed from the board.
- Those members of the EMS Council who represent the cities and the fire districts must be elected. Right now, Olympia is represented by their chief, not a city council person. That will revert back to elected officials.
- There was a presentation about the director going to the County Board of Health. The topic is opioids and opioid incentives and where EMS providers are heading and what the MPD is planning on doing. The plan is to continue with the protocols for the paramedics, who will continue to carry Narcan. The objective of the medical program director and of the system now is not just to treat and release but to try to help the patients change their lives and change their dependence on opioids. There is a drug available that gives the same feelings of high that opioids do, but it is not addictive and does not cause harm, and only one dose a month would be needed.
- What has been learned is that when Narcan is given, there is a very high percentage of recipients who have no follow up and just walk away. If there is an EMS response, then those individuals can be treated and taken to the hospital. The post-OD death rate is unacceptable, and therefore it will be attempted to change to a chemical treatment.
- There was also discussion about the Medic One structure. Medic One is an agency of Thurston County, and as such, Thurston County has an internal charge rate against the agency. This amounts to about \$800,000. There are significant restrictions on how they can operate and help the fire service agencies do their jobs. They are going to start looking at breaking away from the county and creating an independent agency, much like TCOMM did. This will probably take place within the next year.
- Commissioner Roberts asked about the handout titled Medic One Initiatives. There is an item that mentions Narcan and suboxone and Commissioner Roberts wanted clarification. Commissioner Kirkbride was unsure of what this item is regarding. Chief Brooks was able to clarify that they are continuing to evaluate the BLS Narcan as an option. Suboxone is the drug that Commissioner Kirkbride was mentioning that can be given as an alternative to opioids.
- Commissioner Kelling inquired as to whether Thurston County has been issuing suboxone for the past several years. Chief Brooks clarified that public health has done so, but not EMS. There are also suboxone clinics available.

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

The next meeting will take place on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Commissioner Roberts will be unable to attend; Commissioner Gamble is also unable to attend. However, the meeting is recorded, and comprehensive handouts are provided, so Commissioner Roberts will still be able to give a report at the next fire commissioners meeting.

### C. City/District Liaison

There was a meeting scheduled for today, but it was canceled at the last minute because the mayor and deputy mayor were unable to attend.

The chief and the deputy chiefs met with the new economic development director. Commissioner Hetzler and Commissioner Kelling both met the new director.

Chief Brooks met with the new director, Vanessa Dolbee.

- She is coming to the City of Lacey from the City of Renton. There was a presentation about the potentials for community risk reduction and partnerships in the future. There was also a high level discussion around several items and issues such as tribal development.
- There were also conversations about the new police station construction and some of the challenges they are experiencing with the organized protests occurring weekly. There is concern for the risks of vandalism as the building progresses.
- Right after the new economic development director began, she was notified that her deputy director is going to retire. They have not yet filled the building official position that was vacated when Wade Duffy retired at the end of last year. They are down to a group of finalists for that position. Chief Cerovski has been asked to sit on the interview panel for that position.

### D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

Commissioner Kelling reported from the March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- Juan Mejias, the new Medic One ALS Program Manager, introduced himself. He is coming from Texas.
- There is paramedic testing coming up. They are still short paramedics, so the medic unit is still in jeopardy.
- Commissioner Kelling shared the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary information.
- The next meeting is on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

### E. Thurston Regional Planning Council

No report; the next meeting is April 5<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Hetzler is unable to attend the meeting but will watch the recording and give a report.

### F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is less than two weeks ago. Chris DeBell has been doing tremendous work. Watching the weather forecast to determine whether outdoor activities will be possible. Invitations have been extended to the city council. Chief Brooks passed out the 75<sup>th</sup> commemorative coins to the commissioners. Banners will be going up next week.

- The Model T from the lobby is officially running and it can pump water. It has probably been 50 years since it last pumped water. This will be part of the show on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Cerovski shared:

- Getting close to substantial completion for the Vehicle Repair Facility. Next week, the PSE gas infrastructure should be installed. The electrical was installed last week. By the end of March, all the asphalt work should be completed. The substantial completion appointment meeting will take place on April 17<sup>th</sup>. All final inspections are taking place in the beginning April. The facility should be ready to occupy by the end of April.
- Chief Brooks added that there will be conversations with the City of Olympia regarding an official ribbon-cutting ceremony. There is a possibility that the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting could be conducted at the new facility, or there could be a tour before or after the meeting.

### VI. OLD BUSINESS

#### A. 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning

As covered under Community Outreach.

Commissioner Kelling reported that he passed out a copy of a draft of a voiceover message from the commissioners that would accompany a slideshow, since the commissioners will not be able to attend.

### VII. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Budget Update

Chief Brooks reported that in 2023 prior to the levy restoration, in order to bring a balanced budget for 2023, one area that was underfunded was the Equipment Repair & Replacement Fund. Director Huff had a plan for keeping close to \$1 million in the fund. Due to last year's budget constraints, the amount was lowered by \$800,000. 2023 finished out at around 5% under budget. Director Kirkwood has been doing analysis, and it seems prudent to make a catch-up transfer. Director Huff's preliminary budget for 2024 had anticipated additional cash carryforward. All of this can be done within previous appropriations. This would be a separate secondary transfer that Director Kirkwood could do with the country treasurer. The catchup transfer of \$800,000 should be made in the early part of the year, and then the normal \$950,000 transfer would be made at the end of the year. This will give flexibility to Chief Cerovski and the logistics team while continuing to navigate supply chain issues.

Commissioner Kirkbride clarified that no action by the board is necessary, and Chief Brooks confirmed that this is just informational with no action required. Director Kirkwood gave a more in-depth financial report with accompanying graphs and visuals.

## B. Policy Updates

### i. P-510.2 Work Hours and Leave

This policy is a function of refining definitions. Administrative leave was revamped to provide a more clear understanding of what that definition is and what it is for. Administrative leave is different here than in some agencies. Typically, it is used for an investigative process, but within LFD, it is used for a multitude of things. It is determined by the fire chief or their designee.

Leave without pay has also been clarified. It is something directed by the district.

Union leave has also been clarified. The definition was assembled through internal processes by the sworn membership. At the request of union leadership, it is awarded or directed by the chief or their designee.

Other categories of leave include domestic violence leave, FMLA leave, and PFMLA leave are all protected leave statuses. The use of these different types of leave is clarified in the policy document.

Chief Brooks added a clarification that the collective bargaining agreement stipulates how union leave is granted. Each member contributes four hours annually from their accrued leave to the union leave bank. The executive board awards the opportunity to travel or go to conferences on the behalf of the local union.

### ii. F-306.1 Payroll

Many changes were made to the payroll policy. There was solid work done by the policy and procedure group. Chief Schmidt and Chief Brooks also worked on the policy update. The finance office was also involved. One big change of note regards longevity pay.

Commissioner Kirkbride asked for clarification about longevity pay, and Chief Brooks reported that the goal is to equalize the value of longevity for every member, represented or nonrepresented. It will be 2% of the top step firefighter wage scale. It is a fixed dollar amount applied to every member that is at the 5-10 year mark. There is now a single value per step, whereas before it had to be calculated individually based on whether the wage scale was above or below the top step firefighter. This policy benefits the wage earners to fall below the firefighter wage scale. Their longevity will no longer be valued lower than other members.

**MOTION:** To adopt Policy P-510.2 and F-306.1 as presented.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride

Second: Commissioner Roberts

Carried: Unanimous

#### C. April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, BoFC Meeting

Chief Brooks reported that due to the lack of a quorum at the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, prior resolutions and past practices were reviewed. It has been determined that the commissioners can move forward with paying the necessary critical warrants so that there are no late payment issues. The board would be asked to approve both sets of warrants at the second meeting in April, or at a singular meeting on the second date in April if it is chosen not to meet on April 4<sup>th</sup>.

The other alternative would be to select a different date for the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

None of the commissioners are able to participate in the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Chief Brooks reported that a formal cancellation of the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting will be posted both at the facility and on the website as required.

**MOTION:** To cancel the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler

Second: Commissioner Kirkbride

Carried: Unanimous

### **VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Chief Brooks reported:

- Commissioners had inquired about the 2023 Annual Report. Chief Cerovski and Chris DeBell have been working on it. There were data challenges from the record management system from 2023. They have been working hard to reconcile those. Chief Cerovski does have some data that he feels confident in sharing. It is likely that by the April meeting, there will be an annual report available for review.

Chief Cerovski reported:

- Very similar incident response from the previous year. 75% of incidents are rescue and EMS. 2% is related to fires. There are multiple other categories that make up the remaining percentages.
- The fire incident breakdown shows that of the fire responses, 33% were structure fires, 10% were vehicle fires, vegetation fires were 35%, and rubbish and outside fires were 22%.
- Service incident breakdown: 69% of responses were related provided generalized public service assistance. The remaining percentages include the categories of code enforcement, distress assistance, water removal, and smoke removal.

- There was a breakdown of response time performance, separated out into the categories of call processing time, turnout time, travel time, scene time, and then total incident time.
- There was a breakdown of incident activity by month. The total in 2023 was roughly 2% higher than the previous year.
- There was a breakdown of incidents and station responses. There was also a breakdown of primary unit response activity, primary service area reliability, and response by property type. 43% of responses are to one- or two-family dwellings. 11% were to care facilities. 10% were to multifamily dwellings. 12% were to business, education, and assembly occupancies. 22% were to roadways and outdoors.

Chief Brooks reported:

- An initial cover letter was received earlier this week from the Washington Survey and Rating Bureau. In the city of Lacey urban growth area, essentially nothing changed. This is a high level summary that does not include the actual scoring metric. Chief Brooks anticipates improvement in some of the categories in those incorporated areas. Currently remaining Class 3.
- The area of challenge is the Station 32 area, the volunteer program, where there has been a struggle to have a regular volunteer presence and response. Because of this, they are proposing a significant downgrade of that station area's response if no mitigation is offered. There were immediate staff discussions.
- After the initial cover letter is sent, there are 30 days given to respond saying that it is desired to have discussion about potential mitigation or improvement plans. If a response is not given in 30 days, the report is published. If a response is given, then there will be an opportunity to sit with Survey & Rating Bureau and discuss what the different options are. There would then be 30 days given to offer some level of mitigation proposal. Depending on whether that is accepted and adopted, there could be granted up to one year to provide implementation of such an improvement plan. During that period of time, the rating would be considered in that area "in abeyance." At the end of that time period that was mutually agreed on, they would come back to review what mitigation strategies have been applied and then reconsider the rating for that particular service area.
- There is no significant call growth in that area; it has been very flat. A significant percentage of the Station 32 area falls outside of the Washington Survey and Rating Bureau's requirement five mile drive distances from other stations. Right now, that area is covered from the staff stations, even when there are volunteers or other responders from Station 32. There is a co-response to have a full response. Right now, either Station 33 or 34 are primarily covering that. Because they are outside of that five-mile range, any areas that fall outside of that could fall as far as a Class 9 in their rating. At that level, there are issues with insurability. That could potentially impact the Nisqually Tribes' properties.
- Already working on proposals and strategies. One that was almost immediately brought up is a unique opportunity. The Southeast Thurston and East Olympia fire districts that are currently moving toward a planned regionalization fire authority have a Station 65 that exists off of Spurgeon Creek Road. They, too, struggle with not having a presence there. They do not have a facility that allows

for an onsite response (no crew quarters; only apparatus, with no room on the property to put anything else there). They were downgraded during their last rating for that area. They are undergoing a re-rate right now as well.

- Chief Schmidt and Chief Brooks met with their administration yesterday. They have an interest in a joint venture. A vast majority of their Station 65 area is within five miles of Station 32. If a joint staffing model was provided – for example, a residence or something similar – it could benefit both districts. They were very interested in the discussion, although it is still very preliminary.
- There will be a conversation with Survey & Rating on March 25<sup>th</sup> about the potentials of this. If a plan is required to be submitted within 30 days, that is a very tight timeline, especially since the board is not meeting in early April.
- Chief Brooks is going to ask for the latitude to push this beyond the commissioners' first May meeting to be able to bring any plans back to the commissioners and give staff more time to develop the plan.
- Commissioner Kirkbride asked for clarification on the rating. The majority is 5, but those areas that are within 1,000 feet of a hydrant are a 3, just like the city and the remainder of the district. Because the Nisqually properties have their own water and hydrant systems, they are Class 3. Going from a 3 to a 9 would be a very significant change. The rating is done every 5 years; the last one was done in 2018.
- Commissioner Kelling inquired whether the commissioners need to provide availability dates in case a special meeting is needed. Chief Brooks requested to wait until the Monday meeting with Survey & Rating and see how that goes.
- Chief Brooks also reported on the challenges with paramedic recruiting. Medic One is trying new approaches. LFD3 has found three internal candidates who are interested. Two of them meet all of the prerequisite requirements for the Tacoma Community College program. The third member does not currently meet them but does have time between now and when the program starts in September and is working on the prerequisites now.
- In talking with Medic One and partners at Olympia and Tumwater, each agency is allocated two spots per year. Olympia and Tumwater are not leveraging all of their spots, so one of their allocated positions can be borrowed by LFD3 for partial funding. All three of the interested candidates have been encouraged to apply. There are two paramedics who are going to retire soon and two others who are on the promotional eligibility list.
- For those who go through the program, they are essentially off duty for a year. Medic One helps by paying both tuition costs and a flat fee for some of the backfill costs associated with the coverage that is required.
- The Family Day for South Sound Recruit Academy is taking place on April 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. All of the family members of the recruits are invited to go to Station 64 and watch the live burn going on that day. If any commissioners would like to attend, staff generally goes over and the commissioners could come too.
- The graduation date has been set for June 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

Chief Schmidt reported:

- A shift had a fire on March 12<sup>th</sup> about 6:30 in the evening. Occupants were home and were able to evacuate. It was a single-family resident in the Tanglewild area. The crews were able to get there in about 5 minutes and mitigate the fire in 10 minutes. There was a loss of family pets.
- There was a fire this morning at 2:00 a.m. in the same area (unrelated). Mitigation took about 20 minutes. Crews have been working with Thurston County Sheriff's Office on the belief that the cause is suspicious.
- In both cases, there were great responses by the A shift crews.
- There was a member who sustained burns on their ears, even though wearing the full PPE. The fire was suspicious in nature and extremely hot conditions. One firefighter was transported to the hospital. He will make a full recovery and he is doing well.

## **IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Roberts – thanks to everyone for all their hard work.

Commissioner Kirkbride – thanks to everyone for everything they are doing and working on.

Commissioner Gamble – will be able to attend the anniversary celebration on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Commissioner Hetzler – would it be possible to finalize the time and date for the work session?

Commissioner Kelling responded that the date being considered is Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. This would be a morning session. It will depend on staff estimate for time. It was agreed that 8:00 is acceptable to all as a starting time, not to exceed four hours.

Commissioner Kelling – attended the Emergency Management Executive Seminar on the 28<sup>th</sup>. There were a couple other fire commissioners, one of whom happens to be a paramedic. The county has a mitigation plan, which was TRPC led. It was approved by the state EMD. The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan update is next. That is the Emergency Management Department lead. There was an Emergency Management 101 presentation. One key takeaway is that in the event of a catastrophic emergency or a defined hazard event, there is no centralized decision-making body for resource allocation. It is reliant on city and/or county leadership to get together and cooperate on whatever cross-boundary assistance is required. There will be a session in May to take a look at the wildland firefighter season coming up. Also listened in on the EMS update to Lacy City Council. That was done in a work session. There was an update about ten months ago with representatives from Providence St. Peter and Capital Medical Center. Chief Brooks represented as well as Ben Miller-Todd. The big takeaway is that a lot of the initiatives that they were talking about at the time, such as St. Peter's breezeway and other initiatives, are having a positive effect. However, when Ben Miller-Todd briefs on the general demographics,

there is not the same level of decrease in call volume. There is a positive effect in getting the response units back on the road and not static. There seems to be good cooperation between all of the elements that are working together, but there was a call for additional public education on treatment options because the overall throughput and the numbers continue to go up. St. Peter's briefed that about one in every five visits now is virtual. There continues to remain a focus on behavioral health and narcotics and overdose incidents. Capital Medical briefed that the Lacey OCED (off campus emergency department) is fully functional. This is one of a number of OCEDs that they have in the region. It is having an effect in reducing the St. Peter's emergency department load. Finally, thanks to everybody for their time tonight and the service to the members of the district and the community that is being served.

## **X. CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

## **XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT**

None.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned as of 6:48 PM.

***Next Regular Meeting: To Be Determined  
Available via remote meeting.***

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Chair

4/18/2024

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Vice Chair

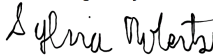
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Commissioner

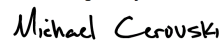
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