THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

April 2, 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 Hetzler Commissioner Kirkbride	Commissioner Kelling Commissioner Roberts	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

Chief Schmidt made a change to the agenda: the WHA presentation is being removed from the agenda. This will be done at a later date when more board members are present.

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

IV. MEMBER RECOGNITION

Commissioner Kelling – 5 Years of Service

Chief Schmidt acknowledged Commissioner Kelling's five years of service. His pin will be given to him at a later meeting when he is attending in person.

V. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

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

B. Warrants (AP 4A 2026):

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5767 through 5771; checks numbered 24828 through 24838 for a total amount of $72,381.12.
- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: checks numbered 24839 through 24840 for a total amount of $49,146.68.

C. Payroll 3B-2026 in the amount of $785,599.12.

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

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One
Commissioner Kirkbride reported from the most recent meeting:
- The Comprehensive Plan was adopted last fall by the Board of County Commissioners, which allows for moving forward into the next phase, a Community Needs Study. This began at the beginning of the year. A consultant was hired to direct that process.
- There are four phases to the Community Needs Study. The first phase is meeting with the fire districts, fire departments, chiefs, commissioners, etc. to find out their view on where the county is and where it should be going. The conversation was very productive.
- The next phase is to get input from partners including hospitals, care providers, ambulance companies, etc.
- In the fourth place, all of the information that has been gathered will be used to create a strategic plan to be implemented in 2027.

B. Thurston 9-1-1 Communications (TCOMM)
Commissioner Roberts reported that the meeting yesterday was canceled due to lack of agenda items. The next meeting is scheduled for May 6th.

C. City/District Liaison
Commissioner Hetzler reported that the next meeting will take place on May 21st.

D. LFD3/EOFD ILA Committee
Commissioner Hetzler reported that the next meeting will take place on April 30th.

E. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association
Commissioner Kelling reported that the next meeting will take place on April 21st.

F. Thurston Regional Planning Council
Commissioner Kelling reported that the next meeting will take place on April 3rd.

G. Community Outreach
Chris DeBell reported:
- The CPR-7 team was at Chinook and Komachin Middle Schools last week and provided instruction to over 150 seventh graders.

- A crew was sent to help provide a good luck send-off to the dance teams of the three high schools (North Thurston, Timberline, and River Ridge), who all advanced to state competition.
- Social media analytics: moving forward, a monthly report will be provided on engagement from the prior month.
    - The third top post was Chief Schmidt's letter to the community in response to the Second Hand Rose fire. This had a reach of more than 23,000. This one is noteworthy because it was a text-only post, and these typically do not perform as well.
    - The second top post was the weekend dog rescues. These were just shy of 55,000.
    - The top social media post was the Second Hand Rose fire post, with almost 230,000 views.
- A podcast project is underway. It will be titled The Signature Series. The focus is on leadership, growth, and the stories that shape public service. Tiffany Baldwin, LFD3's multimedia specialist, is acting as the host and producer of the podcast. The first episode is complete. It features an interview with Chief Schmidt.

H. Operations and Logistics

Chief Carson shared:

- About a week and a half ago, there was a significant accident on I-5. Lt. Scott Santhuff was off duty and heading to special operations training that morning. He and another SORT member came across the accident and immediately took action. His action epitomizes Service with Excellence.
- Two nights ago, there was a structure fire in the northeast section in Station 35's area. Crews showed up and contained the fire to the garage. There was no extension into the house and no injuries.
- This week, there was a meeting with Public Safety Testing to start the next lieutenant process. There are 21 members who signed up for that process. The three days of testing will take place on May 19-21.
- The four newest battalion chiefs have successfully completed probation as of April 1st.

Chief Patti reported on East Olympia logistics:

- There was one emotionally charged incident involving a young person's suicide. It was a rough call. Crews did a great job of working with Medic 5. The peer support person on their shift immediately recognized the issue and talked with the crews.
- This morning, assistance was given to South Thurston with a structure fire in the Bucoda area.
- The meet and greets are almost done. There are two left to do. These have been very well received by the crews.
- This week, the second round of trucks went into the VRF for inspection. These rigs have a much shorter list of repair needs. One rig remains in the VRF but should be back early next week.

- Facility inspections began today. Two of the four stations are complete. The process includes walk-arounds and looking at maintenance needs and recommendations. At this point, there are no major issues. Crews have taken really good care of the stations.
- On Friday, crews will host the SSRA Family Day at Station 64 at the Training Center.
- This week, the new logistics technician is onboarding. He will be starting his first day with Moses tomorrow.
- The elevator is back in service.

I. Standards and Resilience

Chief Cerovski shared:

- Training division: the SSRA is in week 6 of the fire section and week 12 overall.
- The SSRA Family Day is April 10th.
- The rest of the training division is focused on the annual refresher training for the members.
- Community Risk Reduction: applications were received for the fire investigator position. The goal is to add four fire investigators to the department.
- The May 7th Insurance Symposium will take place from 8:00 to noon at the Lacey Community Center.
- Community Risk Reduction is scheduled to provide a presentation at the Commissioners Meeting on April 16th.
- Safety and Compliance: this division worked with Training last week and traveled to Wenatchee for the Training and Safety Conference.
- Confirmation was received that Wetherholt, the contracted engineering firm, would visit Station 34 this week. They did so on March 31st. Their professionalism was very impressive. The architect and the contractor were both present as well.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. 2025 Annual Report — Board Review and Approval

Chief Schmidt reported:

- Commissioners have sent in their edits and suggested changes. One of these is changing the pictures on the front cover to include more of what LFD3 does day to day, including EMS, car seat checks, and other routine activities.
- Also now included is a map of the district area, broken down by stations so that community members have a visual to understand service in Lacey.
- Acronyms used in the document are broken down and explained.
- Staff would like to know if the board feels comfortable making a motion to publish this for the public.

MOTION: To approve publishing of the 2025 Annual Report of Lacey Fire District.
Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Kelling
Carried: Unanimous

B. Bond Level Authorization — Board Review and Approval

Chief Schmidt reported:

- At the workshop last week, staff presented revisions to address concerns from the board about the bond. The funding amount presented was $98.3 million, knowing that there is still time between now and June to work through remaining details, with an opportunity in June to make a final determination of an amount to bring forward to the public.
- The ask is for a motion for a not-to-exceed number so that staff can start working more formally on the plan and design process for projects going forward.

MOTION: That the Board of Fire Commissioners of Lacey Fire District 3 direct the fire chief, staff, and legal counsel to take all necessary and appropriate steps to develop and pursue a voter-approved general obligation bond measure in an amount not to exceed $98.3 million.
Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Kelling
Carried: Unanimous

C. Facilities Security and Public Access — Staff Report

Chief Schmidt reported:

- At the last meeting, it was reported that a group of citizens had reached out and asked to meet with staff and with Chief Schmidt in particular about their concerns around ICE action that took place on property.
- Chief Schmidt attended this meeting at which about 15 citizens were in attendance.
- The group had the most concern about whether LFD3 works with ICE and whether there is a relationship with ICE in which use of LFD3 property had been previously arranged.
- The primary conversation focused around expressing that LFD3 does not normally work with federal agents, nor do federal agents notify LFD3 of their activity.
- The community members had several requests for LFD3. When they looked through documents and procedures, they requested language changes that would be more inclusive. They also had a variety of concerns about access to public areas and groups that may or may not be welcome.
- Prior to meeting with this group of community members but after finding out about the event on Station 34's property, a work group was created to work on LFD3 documents. Staff would like that work group to reconvene. Commissioner Roberts was kind enough to participate, and her repeated attendance would be very welcome, as

well as perhaps one other board member, to talk more specifically about the asks from this group.

- One of the other asks was regarding messaging out to the public and making sure that the public knows that calling 911 is safe regardless of citizenship status.
- Commissioner Roberts expressed ongoing willingness to continue participate. Commissioner Kirkbride also expressed willingness to participate as his schedule allows.
- Chief Schmidt suggested that staff will recommend some dates, which will be sent to the board members. A date can than be selected.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Regional Conversations Regarding ILA and Potential Mergers
Chief Schmidt reported:

- LFD3 has a relationship and ILA with East Olympia. There has been a discussion about South Bay Fire reaching out and asking to have conversations.
- South Bay's Board of Fire Commissioners had a workshop last Friday. Chief Schmidt, Commissioner Hetzler, and Chief Kirkwood were in attendance. Steve Brooks was the coordinator of the group. There was also union representation both from South Bay and from Local 2903.
- South Bay asked for an update about LFD3's relationship with East Olympia.
- The Board of South Bay asked that a committee be convened, consisting of East Olympia, Lacey, and South Bay, to consider what a merger might look like.
- It was recommended that a date be looked at for later April to include a number of board members from each agency to allow participation and understanding without creating the need for a public meeting, as this would just be early conversation and discovery.
- For South Bay and Lacey, this would require two members of the board (a chair and one additional). East Olympia would send one member.
- The ask from staff is for a board member to attend. The meeting will be on April 27th at 8:30. Commissioner Kirkbride offered to attend.

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Schmidt reported:

- There are several executive staff members who will be out of the office for part or all of next week. If any needs arise, Chris DeBell is a great resource and knows how to get in touch with everyone.
- In response to the workshop last week: Chief Kirkwood is already engaged with bond council and starting to set up some exchanges of information.

- LFD3 has also engaged with the media team regarding getting some footage and information out about the fire district, facilities, etc.
- Another project that Chief Schmidt and Chris DeBell have been working on is getting the community advisory group back together. There will be posts online to solicit for members of the community who want to be involved in an advisory group. The hope is to get this group together at the beginning of May with at least one meeting before June so that they can give direction to the Board about the District's plan and vision and the community reactions.
- Chief Schmidt has been reaching out to Medic One, TCOMM, and other partner agencies to keep them posted on the projects and the direction that the District is going in.

X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Roberts – thank you for the opportunity to Zoom in. A special thank you for the lovely "get well" basket from the administrative team. Regarding training, it would be helpful if there could be an overview of the legal definition of a merger and more information surrounding that.

Commissioner Kelling – thanks for the opportunity to participate virtually. The reports from the meeting, from the fire chief on down, really exemplify the values of the agency. It is immensely appreciated.

Commissioner Kirkbride – what was heard in all of the staff reports today shows how great this organization is. This organization is doing the job that the people want and need. The job is complicated and extensive, but every single report shows outstanding work being done. The Washington State Fire Marshall's newsletter includes an article about a group of kids from Commissioner Kirkbride's high school. They have a program in the high school to introduce kids to the fire service. This would be a great idea for LFD3 to emulate.

Chief Schmidt commented that there would be some competition because there is already New Market Skill Center in Tumwater. They have a firefighter program. LFD3 members are involved, and Chief Cerovski is on the board there. Chief Schmidt is going out on April 14th to do their chief's interviews.

Commissioner Hetzler – a reminder to the commissioners about the PDC filing deadline; please get reports in. Commissioner Hetzler will be out of town beginning next week and will not be in attendance at the next meeting.

XI. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Correspondence
None.

XII. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. In accordance with RCW 42.30.110(1)(b) to consider selection of a site or acquisition of real estate.

The executive session was scheduled for 15 minutes starting at 6:21 p.m.
No action was taken. The executive session concluded at 6:37.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:37 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: April 16, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.

Chair	Vice Chair
Melissa Gamble (05/08/2026 06:20:35 PDT)	Sylvia Roberts (04/23/2026 11:58:07 PDT)
Commissioner	Commissioner
Richard Kelling (04/22/2026 17:48:45 PDT)	
Commissioner	ATTEST: District Secretary

04 02 26 BoFC Meeting Minutes Final

Final Audit Report 2026-05-08

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