THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

April 6, 2023

Commissioner Kirkbride
Commissioner Gamble
Commissioner Hetzler
Commissioner Kelling
Commissioner Roberts

The meeting was held in person with limited attendance and is open to the public via the Zoom meeting platform. The meeting is being recorded.

Commissioner Roberts participated via Zoom.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair 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 Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Hetzler
Carried: Unanimous

III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft minutes of the March 16th, 2023, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

B. Warrants:

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5167 through 5169; checks numbered 23469 through 23484 for a total amount of $55,452.89.
- Capital Projects Fund 307 (2017B) EFT number 5170 for a total amount of $4,610.00.

C. Payroll 3B in the amount of $565,062.89.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Gamble
Second: Commissioner Hetzler
Carried: Unanimous

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

No report – the next meeting is April 19th. The budget committee starts their work on the 21st with an orientation and then a series of meetings.

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

Commissioner Gamble reported from the April 5th meeting:

- During the executive session, deputy director recruitment was discussed. The final person who took this position is Jonnica Elkins. She has 25 years of experience.
- All departments were under budget after a few late payments were received in the last month.
- TCERN: Motorola updated their schedule. As of now, it should be complete in the first quarter of 2025. Things that are affecting this date are equipment delivery, site scheduling. There are still two pending sites in Dupont at Fire Station 82.
- Currently staffing two academies. There have been six grads. A third academy is scheduled in early May. Currently recruiting at JBLM.
- Legislative bill 1134 is still alive in the legislature, regarding coordinating 911 and 988.
- Building updates: there will be a bid in May for security camera replacements.
- Received the AWC award for eleven years in a row, which has decreased the health insurance benefits by 2%.
- April 9th will begin telecommunicator care week.

C. City/District Liaison

No report – the next meeting is in May or June but will be confirmed.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

Commissioner Kelling reported from the meeting:

- The program speaker was Sheriff Derek Sanders.
- Sheriff Sanders outlined priorities, which include staffing, recruiting, and retention; comprehensive policy review, and improving communications and transparency with the country residents.
- Curbing drug use in jail was also discussed and taking measures to address the circumstances that lead to fatal vehicle crashes.
- Ben Miller-Todd from Thurston County Medic One mentioned that the discussion on the EMS levy continues. They are taking a very deliberate approach and not rushing to try to get a determination.
- Sheriff Sanders had been involved in a car crash in which the other driver was DUI. He is recovering well.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

No report – the next meeting is April 7th.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- On April 2nd, Chris DeBell received her award on behalf of Safe Kids. She was one of three people to receive this award.
- There was a crew at the recent JBLM job fair (one of six or seven fire agencies there). There was strong interest generated from that.
- Actively gearing up for the return of the Lacey Spring Fun Fair.
- An HOA has confirmed an interest in having a presentation on April 25th at Station 33. They are estimating 25 attendees.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- Deputy Chief Cerovski and Assistant Chief Frost are out of town this week.
- There was a good meeting with the architects and engineers. There was a submission of the pre-engineered metal building design. There were a few concerns with some technical elements of the drawing that they did not believe would be in compliance with the city's submission requirements, so it went back for modifications. Hopefully it will be able to be submitted soon to the city for permitting.
- The ground work continues. They have continued to work hard on negotiating issues regarding downtime costs that were being assessed against the district. Those have not been resubmitted so far.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. 2022 Annual Report: Staff Updates and Proposed Action

Based on the feedback at the last meeting, the annual report was revised.

- The mission statement is now on the opening page.
- There was a segment added in the map to identify the locations of the station by common name or their main thoroughfares.
- The strategic plan overview was added. A summary of it was included. In the electronic downloadable version, there will be a live link that will go directly to the complete plan.
- In the EMS section, additional language was added to better describe the difference between ALS and BLS.

MOTION: To approve the 2022 annual report as presented for publication.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler
Second: Commissioner Gamble
Carried: Unanimous

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Potential Restoration of Operating Levy: Staff Report & Board Discussion

- Staff continues to believe that it is timely to request the board to authorize a restoration of the regular property tax levy back to $1.50, which was previously done in 2020.
- Based on the board's direction at the last meeting, Chief Brooks did engage legal counsel on the necessary documents associated with that. They have done a review of the 2020 documents that were used. There have been some very minor technical updates to the forms from the county. Largely, there is no concern with essentially using the same language and approach that was used last time.
- One question that arose was about the specific ability to include capital in this round because capital outlays were expressly excluded in the last because of the bond measure previously. Chief Brooks explained to legal counsel that what has been experienced with the cost escalations in construction, et cetera, that it is important to be able to leverage some of those dollars to wrap up some of the capital projects that were approved. Legal counsel said that there is no problem with removing that prohibition language. If both operations and capital are added, there would need to be some level of limiting language. It cannot be all operations and capital; there needs to be some specificity or limits. An approach was discussed of either naming specific projects that remain, such as the Station 33 expansion.
- Another alternative is that if only operating expenses were listed, only that approximately $7.5 million of new or additional revenue that would come in through the levy restoration would have those restrictions on it, and the remaining or balance of the operating budget would not have those same restrictions. Money could be reallocated in a different direction. It would just be necessary to ensure that that amount of money not be used for

capital purposes. This would allow the language to stay more simplistic and consistent with what has been done in the past.

- Chief Brooks requested draft language available for review in advance of the next meeting on April 20th.
- May 12th is the submission deadline. The April 20th and May 4th meetings are available for further discussion.
- Staff's recommendation would be that if the board is comfortable, they consider action at the next meeting on April 20th to allow more time for information sharing with the public.

Commissioner Roberts commented that it is important when looking at a restoration to try to keep the language as much the same as possible, in the spirit of it being a restoration.

Commissioner Kelling commented that from a transparency perspective, it would be helpful to see the alternate language that would just limit the additional increase to only operating.

It was decided that this will be up for a decision on the April 20th board meeting agenda, so it will be added as an action item.

B. Offer for Temporary Part-Time Employment in Support Services: Board Discussion and Potential Action

- A key Support Services member is off for approximately four months after having a healthy baby girl. Director Gorman is now without assistance in Support Services. A volunteer stepped up who was willing and has education and background to fill in. This person is Chief Brooks' spouse. She discussed the role with Director Gorman and started doing the work already this week. If this is acceptable to the Board, it will be applied retroactively to April 1st. If this is not acceptable to the Board, she will revert back to her volunteer role which she was already filling.

MOTION: <u>To authorize the hiring of a part time position for a Support Services specialist effective April 1st for Lee Brooks.</u>

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Hetzler
Carried: Unanimous

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Brooks reported:

- The Board had specifically recommended that Chief Brooks reach out to Paul Perz about being a citizen advisory committee member. He had questions about the board's vision for the CAC moving forward and whether it would be specific to the levy lid lift measure or if there was a broader scope.

- The question is raised as to whether there should be a formal charter for the citizen advisory committee or other more formal parameters. Mr. Perz brought this question forward for the board. It may be added as an agenda item in the future for more formal discussion.
- Commissioner Kirkbride commented that citizen advisory committees have been in place for the last 20 years and have been invaluable in terms of the provision of thoughtful guidance and advice. He also commented that there would need to be real thought given to what the committee would be charged with doing, so as to appropriately value their time and contribution. Paul Perz is an excellent choice.
- Commissioner Roberts commented that a citizen advisory committee is imperative for providing advice on a variety of issues and decision points.
- It was agreed to add this as an agenda item in May for further discussion.

- Director Hough provided Chief Brooks with a report showing the purchasing card activity over the life of the program. The rebate total is a good amount.
- Director Hough had a report from the treasurer at the county level showing the interest rates on investments. Historically the treasury has always been at the county. Until last year's legislative changes, that was a statutory requirement. Director Hough researched the Washington State local government investment pool with a side by side comparison of both financial institutions. There was a 3% difference. The local government investment pool at the state level was over 4.5% whereas locally it is at 1.5%. Doing research to see how to move forward, with no desire to hurt the relationship with the county treasurer. Director Hough did round number math, and based on average account balances, this would mean a swing of about $300,000 in a single year.
- At the next meeting, there will be a pinning ceremony for the newest lieutenant promotion.
- The next meeting falls in the midst of Volunteer Recognition Week. Chief Brooks would like to highlight the incident support unit volunteers. Chris DeBell is coordinating to bring over the ISU vehicle and have it set up to give a demonstration on how it and the volunteers operate during incidents.
- At the next meeting there will likely be a couple of policy updates. Working on refining administrative personnel policies. The board had asked previously for development of a standardized policy for the flying of the national flag and any limitations with other flags. Chief Cerovski has been working the policy committee on that and a draft should be ready for the board's consideration at the next meeting.
- Commissioner Roberts asked for an overview on the League of Women Voters. Chief Brooks responded that there was a recent public forum held

regarding the Regional Fire Authority between Olympia and Tumwater. The vote will be on April 25th. There is an almost two-hour recording provided by the League of Women Voters. Chief Brooks had a conversation with Chief Carson from Olympia. There were inquiries about the information that was shared. LFD3 was referenced regarding why they were not at the table for the discussions. A comment was made comparing the LFD budget to the combined Olympia/Tumwater budgets. Chief Brooks has clarified with Chief Carson. A statement was made that the LFD operating budget was at $34 million compared to the City of Olympia at $18 million. Chief Brooks clarified that this is not a fair comparison because the adopted budget that is under $34 million for the district does include the required cash carry forward plus over $4 million in capital reserves. The cities have capital reserves and year end cash carry forwards, but those are not attributed to the individual departmental budgets. That brings that significant disparity. Chief Brooks showed the actual numbers related to the property tax revenue, which would be comparative to what the Regional Fire Authority would bring in between their property tax and their proposed fire benefit charge, and that would be the more fair comparison. Hopefully this will be accurately reflected going forward.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kirkbride – will be absent from the next meeting.

Commissioner Gamble – thank you to Chief Brooks and the deputy chiefs and all of the support staff for the annual report. Congratulations to Chris DeBell.

Commissioner Hetzler – will be attending the next meeting via Zoom.

Commissioner Kelling – Chief Brooks shared the slides and notes from the EMS presentation to the Board of County Commissioners on the 22nd of last month. It was helpful for understanding the larger picture and the contributing factors to what's affecting the district members and residents of the county. Those are all available on the Board of County Commissioners website.

Commissioner Roberts – thank you to Commissioner Gamble for attending the TCOMM meeting and to Commissioner Kelling for chairing the meeting tonight. Thanks to Director Hough for all his work on the finances and for improving or highlighting the information. Congratulations to Chris DeBell. Thank you to everyone who worked on the annual report.

X. CORRESPONDENCE

- Chief Brooks shared a piece of original art that was shared, along with a thank you note for the crew of Truck 31. Ms. Brennan is a long term Lacey resident, originally a native of Poland, and works from her home as an artist. She will be donating a piece of art to the district for public display. She wants to express her sincere appreciation for the care provided to her by the crew.

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

- Paul Perz commented that he hopes to live up to the expectations of the citizen advisory committee.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:24 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: April 20th, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.

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Sylvia Roberts 4/20/2023
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Chair

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Rick Kelling 4/20/2023
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Vice Chair

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Melissa Gamble 4/20/2023
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Commissioner

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Liberty Hetzler 4/20/2023
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Commissioner

Commissioner

DocuSigned by:
Steve Brooks 4/20/2023
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ATTEST: District Secretary