THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 15, 2025

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. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: <u>To approve the agenda as published.</u>

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Kelling
Carried: Unanimous

III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT

Kristin Toy commented that the audio was difficult to hear. It was adjusted accordingly.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft minutes of the May 1st, 2025, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

B. Warrants (AP 5B 2025):

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5575 through 5580; checks numbered 24391 through 24421; drafts numbered 1542 through 1557 for a total amount of $1,720,654.31.
- Equipment Repair & Replacement Fund 103: EFTs numbered 5581 through 5583 for a total amount of $5,645.48.
- Capital Projects Fund 301: EFT numbered 5584; checks numbered 24422 through 24423 for a total amount of $45,424.35.
- 2017B Capital Improvement Project Fund 307: check numbered 24424 for a total amount of $23,717.70.

C. Payroll 5A-2025 in the amount of $2,087,550.62.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Gamble
Second: Commissioner Kirkbride
Carried: Unanimous

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One
No report; the next meeting will take place on May 22nd.
There will be a West Region EMS Council meeting on June 4th.

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

Commissioner Roberts reported from the May 14th meeting:

- Within TCOMM, an individual named Landon is the 2024 APCO Radio Technician of the Year for the state.
- Sales tax is up 2% from last year. All revenue is current over and all expenditures under.
- There was an update on TCERN. From TCOMM's perspective, things are going well. It would be interesting to hear how it is going from the perspective of the fire service. There is still overlay work being done. They continue to work to prepare the subscriber programming update. Chief Patti interjected that it is going well. There was a recent meeting to finalize changes. It is currently in a period where each agency can put in their individual agency changes and then there will be work on the reprogramming process.
- Regarding the phone replacement system: this will be postponed until November. The new phone system will not be in place before July 4th, so it will be waiting until fall.
- A resolution was passed to give Wendy, the executive director, the right to move forward with the Bald Hills site. It is up, but there is no power to is (it has always been run by solar). Given the complexity of the new system, this no longer seems

like a good idea. It is on Weyerhaeuser land, so work is being done with Weyerhaeuser to figure out the least expensive way to get power to the site.
- The strategic plan annual update is available on the TCERN website.

C. City/District Liaison

No report; the next meeting is on May 23rd.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

No report; the next meeting is May 20th.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council

Chief Cerovski is absent and will provide a report at the next meeting.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Schmidt shared:

- On May 1st, a fire extinguisher training was conducted by duty crews.
- On May 5th, there was a presentation about fire safety and fall risk given to a educational organization that supports women ages 55 to 65. This was provided by Community Risk Reduction.
- Several station tours have been given; helmets have been given out; and five car seat fittings have been done in the last week and a half.
- The Lacey Fun Fair is taking place this weekend. Crews will be over there for the duration of the event.
- Chief Schmidt was invited to the Lacey Newcomers event at the community center/senior center. It was a very enjoyable group of people who asked great questions. One woman shared a story about getting a flat tire last year near the diverging diamond and about an LFD3 crew coming to check on her and changing her tire. They had concerns about the condition of her donut tire, so they followed her to Les Schwab, first calling to let them know that she was on her way. This woman was very thankful for all of the crew's work on her behalf.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Schmidt shared:

- There are bids out on paint for the exterior of Station 31. There is a bid going for the floors at Station 31.
- A process is underway of looking into redoing the parking lots at all of the facilities (restriping, clean up, etc.)
- Commissioner Kelling inquired if there is a big 31 on the Station 31 building. Chief Schmidt reported that there is not, but there is a goal to get something similar to what is at Station 34. There was also an inquiry about the reader board at Station 31. Apparently there has been a problem with the electronic controller, which is in the process of being replaced.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Resolution for Cooperative Purchasing Review Board Action

- Chief Schmidt reported that the original intent is to pass the resolution to be approve future purchasing. There is not a goal of assigning individual projects to this resolution. This resolution gives staff the ability to make purchases and go through the process.
- Similar to the past, the staff would come to the board for approval for big purchases and get approval to use TIPS for that purchase but not tie the resolution to the individual purchases.

MOTION: To retract the approval of Resolution 898-05-25 that this board made on May 1st and substitute a new resolution, Number 898-05-25, authorization to purchase from and through interlocal purchasing systems.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Roberts
Carried: Unanimous

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Member Benefits Presentation Debby Archer

- Aflac – a supplemental insurance that covers cancer, dental, and accident claims. There are currently eight members enrolled in Aflac.
- AWC – Association of Washington Cities – this provides LFD3 dental and vision coverage.
- DiMartino and Associates – this offers life insurance and disability insurance. The average total monthly premium for members is about $89.74.
- ESPYR – Employee Assistance Program. This offers free and confidential help for a number of areas including work-life balance, financial issues, legal inquiries, childcare referrals, eldercare referrals, family and marital issues, substance abuse, and emotional turmoil. The district pays $1.67 per employee per month for this benefit.
- TPSC – medical and vision plan. The district pays 100% for employees and families.
- HRAVeba – Health Reimbursement Arrangement Voluntary Employees Beneficiary Association. This is funding that can be used for medical expenses such as chiropractic care, hearing aids, co-pays for office visits, etc.
- MERP – Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan. This is a defined benefit plan to be used after retirement.
- Other employee paid benefits: GET (Guaranteed Education Tuition program), Nationwide Deferred Compensation, child support.

- Commissioner Kelling inquired how often the district reevaluated the insurance provider options. It was reported that a reevaluation has not been done at least in the last eight years. Chief Schmidt reported that there is a lot of connection with the state commissioners and the state chiefs regarding whether or not there are other options. In the past when there was a chance in providers, it was a very difficult and protracted process.

B. Organizational Audit Report Chief Schmidt

- Individual interviews were conducted with the chief over the course of two months. Various issues for improvement were uncovered.
  - Communication: need for clarity and transparency. Staff expressed a need for more more proactive and transparent communication across the organization. The action items to be taken is the development of a comprehensive communication plan.
  - Culture: fostering a positive and connected environment. There is inconsistent recognition of achievements, potential for negativity among some long-tenured staff, limited social interaction across divisions, and the executive staff are perceived positively but can seem to be too busy or detached. Action items to be taken include development of formal and informal recognition initiatives, creation of cross-divisional social and team-building opportunities, and further integration and expansion of the Emergenetics program.
  - Processes/Direction: the need for standardization and clarity. Several areas require standardized processes and clearer direction. The action items include establishing a standardized external training request process, review and develop comprehensive accountability policies, develop a robust cross-training program, thoroughly review and revise the annual evaluation process, and prioritize and formalize a job shadowing program when positions are being vacated/backfilled.
  - Work/life balance: respecting time and addressing workload. There is a need to ensure that breaks and lunch periods are respected for all levels of the organization. There are also perceived workload disparities across roles. Action items include reinforcing the importance of respecting personal time and breaks and address workload imbalances by conducting a comprehensive workload analysis.
  - There were additional valuable insights leading to several action items, including: proactively address information entitlement through enhanced communication; explore feasibility of providing more branded uniform items to administrative staff; implement a mandatory ride-along program for administrative staff; continue and potentially expand the practice of early hiring/promotion.

- There is also a lengthy list of what LFD3 is doing well and what the employees are happy with. Overall, there was a lot of positive feedback given during this audit.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. Chief Schmidt reported:

- Interviews were done for Community Risk Reduction Inspector and Investigator. The position has been offered to Kevin Davenport and he has accepted with a likely start date of July 1.
- The multimedia specialist position is currently listed. There was a panel to pare down all of the applicants. There were 47 total applicants. That pool of applicants has been narrowed down, and a smaller group will have in-person interviews on May 28.
- The HR benefit coordinator position is also open and has had more than 30 applicants. This has been narrowed down to 5 who will be coming in for interviews on May 19th.
- Preparation is underway for the 3rd of July with the city of Lacey. There were 25,000 at the event last year. With the 4th being on a weekend this year, more calls than usual are expected this year.
- The boiler has completely failed in this building (Station 31). It has not yet been determined if it will be repaired or if a new unit will be purchased.
- Chief Patti gave an update about calls:
    - There have been a couple of structure fires since the last meeting. Both were handled very quickly with no major losses on the buildings. One was a kitchen fire and the other was located in a ceiling fan.
    - There was a situation with a worker who fell into a sewer line or drainage pipe off of Union Mills. The LFD3 crews were on the scene quickly and were able to get him out.
    - Members of the SORT team were requested to respond to Taholah on the Indian Reservation. Four gentleman had been working on building a water tank and there was a situation with a collapsed scaffolding. The Coast Guard hoisted all four people out of there, and LFD3 was the backup team.
    - One of the battalion chiefs has a family member in a care facility. LFD3 was dispatched to a CPR in progress at the facility while that specific battalion chief was visiting the family member. That individual heard the call and helped the staff, directing the situation, and the individual receiving CPR was transported by the medic unit.

B. District Monthly Financial Report — Director Kirkwood

- Summarized Statement of Activities – the largest amount of property tax revenue for the year was received in the amount of about $15 million. In

General Fund 001, the net excess is $16.2 million, which represents about 41% of the budget balance.

- Donation Fund 101 has a net excess of $16,000.
- Reserve Fund 102 has a net excess of just over $1 million.
- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103 has a net excess of almost $2.5 million.
- General Fund summary: net excess of $19.7 million, which is about 46% of expenditure budgets.
- There has been limited activity in the bond funds.
- Capital Projects Fund 301 has a net excess of $685,000.
- Capital Projects CFEP Funds 307 – this fund needs to be spent by the end of the year. The net excess is about $534,000.
- A number of charts and graphs were presented with visuals of the financial status.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kelling – an HOA meeting took place at the station on Tuesday. There were very positive comments about the district from some of the attendees. Thanks to Chief Patti for the call highlights.

Commissioner Roberts – looking forward to the Lacey Fun Fest this weekend. A big thank you to all of the people who came to this meeting to present information, including Debby, Chief Patti, and Director Kirkwood. Will be attending the next meeting via Zoom.

Commissioner Gamble – Chief Patti's presentation of the call outs was very helpful and it would be great for that to be a more regular part of the meetings. Chief Schmidt's organizational audit was amazing and will yield many benefits.

Commissioner Kirkbride – this has been an exceptionally helpful meeting with all of the presenters.

Commissioner Hetzler – thanks to everyone who presented tonight. A question – does Kevin Davenport have to get different certifications or any special training? Chief Schmidt responded that he does; for inspections, there will be an education process. Chief Cerovski and Chief Roberts have been working on what that looks like. It is anticipated that he will be ready with all of his necessary training by the fourth quarter. There will be a visit to the city council on June 3rd to present to them about the inspection process and what that looks like.

Commissioner Hetzler will not be at the next meeting in June.

X. CORRESPONDENCE

Chief Schmidt shared:

- A letter was received from Captain Michael Fogarty from Southeast Thurston Fire. He wrote a very nice letter explaining that on May 10th in their district at 11:30 in the morning on 507, Lt. Morgan Lowe was in her off time and had noticed that there was an elderly gentleman who was hitchhiking on the side of the road. The gentleman started to walk down the Yelm Tenino trail, so Lt. Lowe followed this gentleman to figure out why he was looking for a ride. He had dropped his vehicle off at an auto repair facility at 9:00 and was working towards getting back home. She contacted Southeast Thurston and asked them to come out. They came and provided a courtesy transport for the gentleman in question. The letter states: "Lt. Lowe's conduct reflects the highest standards of your organization and serves as an inspiring example. Her actions demonstrate that the dedication to serving others extends far beyond the confines of duty hours. Please accept this letter as a formal commendation of Lt. Morgan Lowe's outstanding character and her unwavering commitment to the wellbeing of our community."

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

- A gentleman thanked Commissioner Roberts and Commissioner Gamble for running again. A comment directed to Commissioner Kelling: concerns or confusion regarding healthcare benefits – these benefits are subject to bargaining. They are evaluated every three years with every contract signing.

XII. EXECTUVE SESSION

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

The executive session is scheduled to take five minutes. It begins at 6:55.

The executive session did take five minutes with no action taken. It adjourned at 7:00.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 7:00 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: June 5th, 2025– 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.

Chair	DocuSigned by: [signature] 44E68B53AB35453... 6/6/2025 Vice Chair
Signed by: Melissa Gamble B771FE0627B545E... 6/24/2025 Commissioner	Signed by: [signature] EBC052AD01484B5... 6/7/2025 Commissioner
DocuSigned by: Rick Kelling 6790F53C12574BB... 6/8/2025 Commissioner	Signed by: Michael Cerovski A7184946CD19467... 6/6/2025 ATTEST: District Secretary