

**THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE**

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**May 18, 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.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Roberts 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 Gamble  
Second: Commissioner Kirkbride  
Carried: Unanimous

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

None.

**IV. PROMOTIONAL CEREMONY FOR PARAMEDIC LIEUTENANTS**

**V. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Draft minutes of the May 4, 2023, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

B. Warrants:

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5190 through 5196; checks numbered 23520 through 23542; and draft number 1134 for a total amount of \$864,993.86.

- Capital Projects Fund 301 EFT number 5197 and draft number 1135 for a total amount of \$16,365.00.
- 2017B Capital Projects Fund 307 EFTs numbered 5193 through 5198; and check number 23533 for a total amount of \$102,977.77.

C. Payroll 4B in the amount of \$1,584,235.80.

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

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler

Second: Commissioner Gamble

Carried: Unanimous

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Commissioner Kirkbride reported from the May 17th meeting:

- There are at least 6 to 8 openings on the West Region EMS Council. Several months ago, there were nominations and several of these positions were filled. The executive director would like to fill all the spots, so they are again seeking candidates to fill these positions, including but not limited to law enforcement officers, surgeons, ER nurses.
- The budget committee met earlier this month and went through the preliminary budget projections for the 2024-2025 years given the current situation with the levy. Within the levy, it had been asked for an annual increase of 107%. That stands, and the county has agreed after analysis that the 1.8% increase in revenue for new construction is valid. This puts Thurston County Medic One in a reasonably good position for the next couple of years. However, there is no room in the budget for any unexpected issues, nor for expanding the system. In the fourth year, the budget will dip below the two months' reserve, but then it comes back up. As long as costs stay in line, things are in good shape.
- Regarding hospital delays, there was a Medic One concept in January and February where EMTs manned the vestibule going into the ER. This freed up the ambulances to get back into service. This worked well to the point where St. Peter Hospital and Olympic Ambulance are in discussions for Olympic Ambulance to take over that role.
- There was a financial report showing Thurston County Medic One to be right where it is supposed to be in the budget.
- There were applications from eight fire districts for special projects. Funds are set aside every year for projects that the districts could use extra monies for. All of the applicants were awarded with the funds they had requested, totaling \$11,000.
- Within the contractors' contracts, there is a provision to look at developing a matrix as to the status of the service that is being provided on response times, where the paramedic units are, out of area service, etc. The operations committee has a subcommittee that put that together, and it was presented at

the most recent meeting for action at the next meeting. It contains useful information about the current operation and how it is functioning and where it may be marginal and in need of improvement. It will allow for easier identification of deficiencies that need to be corrected.

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

No report – the next meeting is June 7th.

C. City/District Liaison

Chief Brooks reported:

- Normally there would be a meeting in late June.
- Word was just received at the city council workshop from May 11th that the city council, following an executive session, did vote unanimously to enter into negotiation with the interim city manager Rick Walk for permanency in the role. Chief Brooks will be reaching out to him once that is settled and official to determine whether the third Thursday still works as a scheduled meeting time.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

Commissioner Kelling reported from the meeting:

- A representative from the South Puget Sound Region DNR presented on some of the initiatives as they look to grow the larger state wildfire capacity, mostly dealing with the east side. They have started on the west side a drone program, which is still in the infancy phase.
- The reservations for the Fire Commissioners Association Annual Conference are open. The dates are October 25-28 at the Tulalip Resort.
- On September 9th, Tenino is hosting a First Responder Appreciation Barbecue. This is an annual event.
- Commissioner Kirkbride asked whether fuel management was discussed. Commissioner Kelling responded that this was not addressed, but that his email address is available and will send him a note to ask about this as well as about the growth in the region as far as capacity or capabilities in the South Puget Sound region.
- Chief Brooks offered to have staff make a group reservation for the conference in Tulalip.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

Commissioner Hetzler reported from the meeting:

- There was discussion about the evaluation of the executive director, Marc Daily. His self-evaluation was very similar to the surveys and the feedback that they got. Some areas of opportunity for growth were in diversity, equity, and inclusion. There was substantial discussion about that.

- There will be a new position, with the structure changing as some people exit their roles. Instead of directors, there will be a handful of department managers.
- There was also discussion about indirect rates. Indirect expenses must be submitted to DOT. These indirect expenses are currently higher than normal, about 54% whereas in past years the percentage has been in the upper 40s.

#### F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- Last week, Chief Brooks joined Sheriff Sanders for the Centennial Train Station's 30th Anniversary. It is one of only three in the nation that is exclusively staffed by volunteers and has been since its inception in 1993.
- The Lacey Fun Fair is coming up this weekend. There will be a crew on site, including the public debut of the inflatable firehouse.
- No current requests for HOA meetings.

#### G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- Nothing to report right now. There is still infrastructure work going on at the VRF expansion.
- Still awaiting final plans on the building to submit to the City of Lacey so that production can begin.

### VII. OLD BUSINESS

#### A. Levy lid restoration

- At the last meeting, Chief Brooks had shared a draft of the planned informational brochure and mentioned working with a videographer to do a informational video. Chief Brooks shared the first draft of the video.
- Commissioner Kirkbride commented that it would be better if the persons in the video spoke directly to the camera to better connect with the audience.
- There was also conversation about adding additional information about education that takes place in school (CPR, fire prevention) etc., whether additional video or with text overlay.
- Chief Brooks mentioned there will also be an FAQ document that would be made available to the crew as an expansion to the single mailer, in order to have consistent talking points when out in the community.
- The plan for the video is to put it on the website but also to put the link out on social media.
- Commissioner Kelling commented that when various aspects of a program are discussed, it would help for the video to align with that. He also requested a copy of the FAQs and suggested showing the video to HOAs during meetings.

- Commissioner Gamble mentioned that it still doesn't seem clear that this is not a new tax, and since this is a hard concept for many people to grasp, it would be helpful to explain that more clearly. There was also conversation about whether it's necessary to share the exact financial impact of the levy lid lift per month.
- Commissioner Kelling mentioned the need to make it more clear what the money is going to and why people should support this measure.
- Chief Brooks mentioned there was a deadline for For and Against committees last Friday. Three members of the For committee were authorized by the board at the last meeting. There were no candidates for Against. The elections office was notified of this, and they did their due diligence process of soliciting for an Against committee. There has been no notification that anyone has submitted based on that secondary solicitation, but the deadline for submission of For and Against statements is tomorrow. If an Against statement is submitted, the For committee has until mid-next week to submit a rebuttal.
- Today a request was received from the elections office to sign off on the ballot language. Legal counsel was asked to review and to confirm that it was for Chief Brooks to sign. Legal counsel recognized that there was a fairly substantive change in the submitted language and was reviewing it and looking through it.
  - Chief Cerovski clarified that the part that talks about the number of years and the increases being requested was excluded. It was listed as 2024 through 2029. They excluded all of that. Chief Brooks asked legal representation to look at that to ensure it was not misleading to the taxpayer. The councilor responded in agreement and is working with his team and has reached out to the deputy prosecuting attorney who runs the elections for the upcoming cycle and is waiting to hear back from him before the document is signed and submitted.
- Commissioner Roberts asked if it is known if there are other municipalities or school districts that are going out at the same time. Chief Brooks responded that he is not aware of any. School districts would probably wait until the special elections of next spring. At this time, it appears to be only the five or six other fire districts and regional fire authorities that are on. There is a discussion about a public safety tax at the county level planned for the November general election at the earliest.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **IX. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Chief Brooks reported:

- The city council workshop last Thursday took place with Chief Brooks, Ben Miller-Todd, the director of emergency services, and the Darin Goss,

the CEO of Providence Southwest, on the agenda to present about the challenges of the current state of the healthcare system. They shared about their experiences with the staffing and capacity issues in the healthcare system. The information they provided was appreciated.

- There was a fairly significant spike in insurance premiums this year. Staff is monitoring those costs. The insurance provider has been VFIS to cover the facilities equipment and liability for many years. Historically, the regional broker has been MacIlvennie and Associates. Gordon MacIlvennie has retired and sold his brokerage firm about two years ago to Nicholson and Associates. They have been managing the account and claims since then. There was a presentation last week from WHA Insurance. They offer a lot of wraparound services for the fire service. It looks promising that they may be able to offer more for the same or less cost. They will be coming in to do some initial audits for facilities equipment and providing some samples of the kind of work they can do. If things move forward with them, they may be coming at some point to do a presentation for the fire commissioners.
- Deputy Chief Schmidt, Chief Brooks, and two assistant chiefs will be going to Wenatchee for the State Chiefs Conference. The State Firefighters Association, the volunteer representative organization, is having their 100th Conference and they asked Chief Brooks to come on behalf of the state chiefs to speak at their luncheon tomorrow. Chief Brooks has asked to run for one more year as the president of the association.
- Chief Schmidt had one recent noteworthy interaction with the public. A citizen reached out after an event at Safeway on May 7th. The crew on Aid 33 had gone there to get groceries and witnessed a mother struggling with small children and a load of groceries and offered to help her load her car. The witness was uninvolved but wanted to bring it up as noteworthy and helpful.

## **X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Kirkbride – supports Chief Brooks reelection as president of the association. No impact has been noticed on the agency. Yesterday at the EMS Council meeting, there was a report when talking about the hospital situation about Chief Brooks' presentation to the Lacey City Council. Their report of Chief Brooks' presentation was glowing; it was reported to be very informative and helpful. Commissioner Kirkbride will be unable to attend the June 1st meeting.

Commissioner Gamble – congratulations again to the paramedic lieutenants.

Commissioner Hetzler – will be unable to attend the second August meeting.

Commissioner Kelling – for clarification, wondering if the VRF project is on track. Chief Cerovski responded that it is not due to the problems with the infrastructure and the sewage connection and the delays with the prefab metal building, all of which have been frustrating for staff and the architectural team.

Commissioner Kelling pulled the Washington Fire Chiefs Legislative Report. It was an interesting read and would be worth sharing. It provides some context behind some of the discussions on bills that are not necessarily directly related and can give insight into the next legislative session especially as the governor's race unfolds.

Commissioner Roberts – is there an update on the Days Inn? Chief Schmidt responded that they are just finishing the abatement and are hoping to open in June. They still have a couple of people residing there who they have been working with throughout the process. The project is running as expected and the staff there has been communicating well. They have an idea of which areas they will be working with first to get new residents there. They have a very robust plan for getting people there safely.

Commissioner Kirkbride had a further comment related to the Fire Chiefs Legislative report. The Nisqually received \$6 million from the legislature for their facility.

## **XI. CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

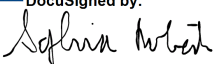
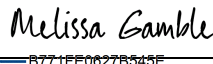
## **XII. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT**

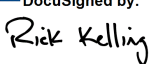
None.

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned as of 6:36 PM.

***Next Regular Meeting: June 1st, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.  
Available via remote meeting.***

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6/5/2023  
Chair  
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6/5/2023  
Commissioner  
Commissioner

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6/5/2023  
Vice Chair  
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6/5/2023  
Commissioner  
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6/6/2023  
ATTEST: District Secretary