THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 21, 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 Kirkbride Commissioner Gamble Commissioner Roberts Commissioners Hetzler		Commissioner Kelling

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

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

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft minutes of the May 7, 2026, Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.
B. Warrants (AP 5B 2026):

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630): EFTs numbered 5794 through 5795; checks numbered 24891 through 24901 for a total amount of $338,506.21.
- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: EFTs numbered 5796 through 5797; checks numbered 24903 through 24904 for a total amount of $20,280.16.
- 2025 Capital Projects Fund 309: EFTs numbered 5798 for a total amount of $48,032.97.

C. Payroll 5A-2026 in the amount of $2,231,763.31.

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

Commissioner Kirkbride made a note that corrected minutes were received from Chris for the agenda for the last meeting.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One
No report; the next meeting is on May 28th.

B. Thurston 9-1-1 Communications (TCOMM)
No report; the next meeting is on June 3rd.

C. City/District Liaison
Commissioner Hetzler reported:

- There was a meeting on May 14th at Lacey City Hall. LFD3 shared the Quiemuth Village update, as well as the upcoming bond measure. There were also discussions about immigration and ICE activity. The City of Lacey reported that they do receive calls from time to time asking about the city's policies and procedures.
- Commissioners Hetzler and Roberts will be attending the city's immigration coordination meeting tomorrow afternoon.
- Commissioner Kirkbride noted that the city was also briefed on the initiation of discussions with Districts 8 and 6. The comment was made that the name Lacey must stay in the district's name.
- The next meeting will be in two months.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association
Commissioner Gamble reported on the Tuesday meeting:

- The guest speaker was Commissioner of Public Lands Dave Upthegrove. He spoke about wildfire funding and preparedness.
- Legislature restored $120 million in funding for wildfire prevention and preparedness with the thought that prevention is cheaper than response. 250,000 acres burned last year. There has been an ongoing drought for four years. With increased disease and worsening conditions from insects due to that drought, the risks are high. The state is hiring more staff to prepare for the fire season.
- There were concerns brought up about fire mobilization and reimbursements taking a significant amount of time. Volunteers are especially impacted by that, as they are less likely to volunteer if they are not being reimbursed. Commissioner Upthegrove was unaware of this problem and will look into solutions.
- There is no reduction plan in timber harvest levels for the next five years. Rising costs and flat timber prices are affecting operations, which already have very tight margins.

- Medic One EMS: they have 25 students expected to graduate in June.
- CPR training growth: 2,400 trained already this year; on track to exceed pre-pandemic levels for CPR training.
- Bylaw changes, updating contract negotiation rules to avoid conflicts of interest. Fire commissioners are being removed from EMS negotiation teams so that there won't be a conflict.
- The next meeting will an in-person potluck at Station 12 on June 20th.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council
Commissioner Kelling emailed Commissioner Hetzler to let her know that there was no report. The next meeting will be on June 5th.

F. Community Outreach
Chris DeBell reported:
- Last week, Engine 33 paid a visit to Komachin Middle School's special needs program for an engine tour.
- There have been two separate station tours at Station 31 for two separate families.
- The Lacey Fun Fair was held last week. There was a crew out on both Saturday and Sunday to staff a booth and the inflatable firehouse. This is a big event to and take coordination from a number of District members.
- There have been five car seat checks and three bicycle helmet fittings at Station 31.
- The social media specialist, Tiffiny Baldwin, attended the National Government Social Media Conference in New Orleans earlier this month. This was an opportunity for her to network with people all over the nation in various government roles. She successfully made connections with several other agencies.

G. Operations and Logistics
Chief Cerovski shared:
- The Operations report in Chief Carson's absence this evening:
- On Friday, May 8th, LFD3 responded to Maple Court Apartments for a commercial fire. While en route, Battalion 34 upgraded the response to a second alarm. On arrival, there was a fire on the second floor. The fire was determined to be controlled by the sprinkler and isolated to one room. The occupants were able to reoccupy the building, with the exception of the room of origin, and one patient was transported to St. Pete's for evaluation of smoke inhalation. There were no firefighter injuries.
- On May 14th, Lacey Fire responded to the 1600 block of 17th Court SE for a residential structure fire. The crews did a fantastic job. The crews made entry and extinguished the kitchen fire. There were no injuries to firefighters or occupants.
- This week wrapped up the Lieutenants Assessment Center. This takes place every couple of years. There were 20 members who applied for the position of lieutenant. This took place on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. A robust third-party firm did an assessment that included skills

evaluations as well as an oral interview. All of that data will be compiled in the next couple of weeks to prepare for future opportunities for promotion.

- Last week, there was a push ceremony for Aid Unit 33. It is now in service at Station 33 on Mullen. So far, everything is performing to expectations. Aid 31 is shortly to follow in the next couple of weeks.
- Operations has begun a department-wide spring cleaning of all of the facilities to ensure that all of the stations are operating in a clean space. This is a good follow-up from the L&I inspections that took place recently.
- LFD3 units Engines 33 and 34 had a duckling rescue. There is a story on the LFD3 Facebook page, which is very heartwarming.
- Commissioner Kirkbride inquired if there a plan to staff Aid 31. Chief Cerovski responded that the original plan was to initiate staffing for Aid 31 in the beginning of 2025, and in the fall of 2024, the report was received from Washington Survey and Rating Bureau. At the time, the staffing was placed at Station 32. By midyear of 2025, the third was added based on the budget numbers. The planning for that staffing was kind of diverted for that essential need. There was still an improvement in minimum staffing and response readiness, but it is still on the docket to focus on the aid unit at 31. Both companies ran over 2700 calls apiece last year. When approaching 3,000 incident volume per company, there starts to be concern about response reliability and station reliability, as well as general morale and wellbeing of the crews.
- Reporting on behalf of Chief Patti for Logistics: still working on upfitting and onboarding of Engine 31. The hope is to have that completed soon and have the push ceremony.
- There was a successful visit from L&I to all of the facilities. It was very successful and much was learned. Reports were received this week and were shared with the labor unit. The logistics team has been very busy tackling things in the report.

I. Standards and Resilience

Chief Cerovski shared:

- Training Division update: Week 13 of the fire section and Week 19 overall. Still focused on the Firefighter II skills that come with the academy. Auto extrication began today and will continue into tomorrow. Job Performance Requirements testing and Multicompany Operations Testing is ongoing to verify their abilities. The week after next, they will move into Wildland topics in the S130 - 190 program and will take the PAC test.
- Graduation day is June 20th at North Thurston High School's Koval Center at 2:00 p.m.
- Community Risk Reduction continues to thrive. There was a successful fire investigations class this week. It concludes tomorrow. This was the first of its kind in this county. The class included burn cells, in which an 8x8 box with furniture in it is set on fire and then the fire is extinguished.

This is a test for the investigators to identify the origin and cause of that fire. It is an excellent hands-on program to complete their book learning.

- Planning continues for the July 15th insurance symposium. There is a rough agenda, which includes introductions and panel discussions with fire service leaders and insurance industry leaders. The event will be approximately from 9:00 to 12:00 on that day.
- Safety and Compliance: the L&I report has already been mentioned.
- Work continues with East Olympia Fire District 6, with support being given with their safety programs and their safety audits.
- The Owners Rep process for the RFQ closes on the 26th. At that time, vetting will begin of the firms who submit applications. June 12th will be the interview date. The goal is for the Owners Rep firm to be ready to start around July 1st.
- Commissioner Kirkbride inquired if L&I also inspected the District 6 stations. Chief Cerovski confirmed that they did. They had a pretty successful report. There were a couple of things that needed attention, and Logistics is supporting East Olympia with those repair efforts.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. District Monthly Financial Report
Chief Kirkwood reported:

- General Fund 001: net excess of $17.5 million. This is about 42% of the total appropriations for the year for expenditures.
- Donation Fund 101: net excess of $15,986.
- Reserve Fund 102: net excess of $1.1 million.
- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: net excess of $619,000.
- General Fund Summary: net excess of $19.2 million. This is 45% of the expenditure appropriations for 2026.
- Bond Fund 201: net excess of $1050.
- Bond 2017 Fund 202: net excess of $762,000.
- 2025 Bond Fund 203: there is no balance in this fund.
- Capital Projects Fund 301: net excess of $959,116.
- 2025 Capital Projects Fund 309: net excess of $5.9 million.
- A variety of charts and graphs were shown.

B. Support Services Updates and Projects – Chris Gorman

- In the last year, Support Services has taken on interns who are in the office every day of the week. This is a huge benefit. These are

Masters of Social Work students who need experience hours in order to graduate. They do a lot of significant work and are of great value to the district. For the summer, there will be two interns who just started this week.

- One of the goals of having these interns is to build a cadre of culturally competent clinicians who can counsel the first responders, and the only way to gain cultural competency is to experience working with the fire service. These interns are going on rigs for ride-alongs and going on calls, getting real life experience with the fire service.
- Next week Support Services will be teaching in the Recruit Academy, teaching on trauma and death and grief and how to talk to people with emotional intelligence.
- There was an opportunity to speak at the Washington Fire Chiefs Conference about supporting people through a cancer diagnosis, as well as the impact of traumatic stress injuries.
- There will be a speaking event in a couple of weeks at the Washington Fire Commissioners Conference in Chelan. There will also be a speaking opportunity at the Washington Fire Administrators Conference later on this year.
- There are several departments across the state wanting Support Services to come and provide trainings for them.
- In June, Director Gorman will assume leadership on the LAST team in the State of Washington. The LAST Team is under the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Foundation. This team comes in and helps departments with line of duty death services. Nine of these took place last year. Director Gorman is on a team to help departments with these events, after shadowing current chairman Pat Ellis for a couple of years.
- As part of his work with Public Safety Officer Benefit, Director Gorman will also be recruiting a team of people to help refile the claims for people who have cancer diagnoses. These are filed with the PSOB in Washington D.C. and file those claims for both the family and the department.
- The Support Services Division oversees the ISU. They did a great job on the Secondhand Rose fire. Thomas, who was there for the majority of that day, got a commendation from one of the battalion chiefs.
- One exciting recent development relates to Mobile Integrated Health (essentially, in-home social work). The social work in homes takes place when crews refer homes to Support Services. Support Services will then try to connect them to the next best resource and try to help them have a different response than calling 911 and having fire crews come out.

- Providence contacted Support Services. They have a residency program for doctors who are in their three-year program to finish their residency and become full-fledged doctors. They have a need to have their doctors get more time with geriatric patients. They asked Support Services about the possibility of having medical doctors go along on the social work visits. This is an exciting opportunity. Support Services met with them a week ago to finalize what this will look like. Work is underway on a PLA, an agreement of how this will work. This could lead to a much bigger program to go on to have a lasting impact on the community.
- Support Services continues to do a lot of counseling and counseling referrals. The responders are willing to reach out to Support Services and request counseling. Support Services has frequent meetings with counselors in the area to determine if they are a good fit to refer first responders to. This is also some of the work that the interns are doing, updating the list of counselors and helping to meet with them and vet them.
- The commissioners had very encouraging and affirming remarks about the wonderful work that Support Service is doing.
- Commissioner Kirkbride inquired about the interns, who are from Michigan and South Dakota, and how they came to be at LFD3. Director Gorman stated that his best friend is a firefighter in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and one of the interns is his daughter. The other individual is her friend.
- Director Gorman also mentioned that Support Services is working with District 6 and District 8 to do social work in their areas. There have been a few home visits in each of those districts. The goal is for this work to expand to the whole county eventually.

To wrap up the administrative report, Chief Cerovski shared in Chief Schmidt's absence:

- The lieutenant testing is coming up.
- Chief Schmidt, Chief Patti, and Chief Carson just returned from the Washington State Fire Chiefs Conference in Wenatchee. Chief Schmidt was asked to present on a New Chiefs Panel and was involved in that presentation.
- The Community Advisory Committee meets tomorrow. Two hours will be spent with the group on education and information. A follow-up meeting will be set up for June so that leadership can bring feedback and suggestions to that board.
- Chief Schmidt and Commissioners Hetzler and Roberts will be attending the training with the Thurston County Commissioners for immigration training and coordination tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

- The Chiefs Updates with executive staff will begin the first week of June. Chief Schmidt is going to specifically talk about updating the members on the bond education, merger conversations, and district priorities for the remainder of 2026. This will be recorded and will be available to the board as well.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Roberts – at a loss for words with everything that Support Services is doing. Particularly impressed with the liaison with Providence and the residents; this will be really good for doctors in training but will also give tremendous support to Lacey senior citizens. Also,very excited about the interns.

Commissioner Gamble – very impressed with Support Services. It is hard to believe it has only been in place for three years; it seems so coordinated and has grown so much. The work being done by Support Services is so valuable. The work of coordinating with Providence is going to be significant; the gap between the fire service and medicine could be bridged by this relationship, and resources can be better utilized by using both of these roles together in a more coordinated way.

Commissioner Kirkbride – very proud about the quality of the people who make up Lacey Fire District 3. A couple of years have been spent at the EMS Council developing a 20-year comprehensive plan for EMS in this county. In the course of doing so, there were meetings with Providence and MultiCare and Olympic Ambulance to get their vision of where EMS should go. The intent of developing the comprehensive plan was to set the stage for what is going on right now with agencies working together for similar goals. The future looks promising, and goals feel attainable because of the quality of the people at LFD3.

Commissioner Hetzler – Commissioner Kelling reached out and asked that his comments be shared about the Lacey Fun Fair. He volunteered there over the weekend and felt that it ran very smoothly and was proud to be a part of it.

X. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Correspondence
None.

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

Jonathan Clemens speaking as a member of South Bay Fire. As a volunteer firefighter for 20 years, Chris and Jordyn have solved issues with two different frequent callers, who made up 5% of the call volume. Chris and Jordyn will be speaking at the next in person officers meeting, equipping lieutenants on how to engage with people. Lacey Fire continues to be a beacon of confidence and collaboration in the county.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:24 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: June 4, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.

Liberty Hetzler (06/22/2026 13:33:33 PDT)
Chair

Vice Chair

Melissa Gamble (06/25/2026 09:53:05 PDT)
Commissioner

Sylvia Roberts (06/22/2026 21:45:05 PDT)
Commissioner

Richard Kelling (06/22/2026 17:17:14 PDT)
Commissioner

ATTEST: District Secretary

05 21 26 BoFC Meeting Minutes Final

Final Audit Report 2026-06-25

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2026-06-25 - 9:52:40 AM PDT

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2026-06-25 - 9:53:03 AM PDT

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