

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

June 1, 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 Kirkbride was excused.
Commissioner Gamble is joining the meeting via Zoom.

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 Hetzler
Second: Commissioner Kelling
Carried: Unanimous

III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft minutes of the May 18th, 2023, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

B. Warrants:

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5199 through 5200; and checks numbered 23543 through 23551 for a total amount of \$34,639.94.

C. Payroll 5B in the amount of \$568,390.20.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Kelling

Second: Commissioner Hetzler

Carried: Unanimous

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

No report.

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

No report – the next meeting is June 7th.

C. City/District Liaison

No report – the next meeting is June 20th. There may be a conflict with that date so still trying to determine the definite date for the meeting. Chief Brooks will ask for the date to be moved out to June 27th.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

No report – the next meeting is June 20th.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council

No report – the next meeting is June 2nd. Commissioner Roberts will Zoom in for the meeting.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- The current focus is on preparing for the 3rd and 4th of July events. Chris DeBell has been in meetings with city staff to plan. The City of Lacey's July 3rd event will be at Rainier Vista. There will also be an event at Long Lake on July 4th. The Nisqually Indian Tribe has not reached out; they may have shifted their focus and sponsorship to the Tumwater event. Chief Schmidt is working with battalion shifts on duty staffing.

- Comments from staff regarding the outreach information on Prop 1 was sent out. Chief Brooks was told there would be an update to share, but nothing has been sent yet. The goal is to finalize everything by next week.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- There was negotiation with the general contractor related to the primary subcontractor for the excavation and other earthwork. There was a fairly sizable bill, \$45-50,000 submitted by the subcontractor for idle time. He charged that he was not able to move forward with the project in a timely manner. Chief Cerovski and Chief Frost did a lot of work with the architects and engineers and their subcontractors to evaluate the situation and determine where primary fault lay with the situation. The City of Lacey and the architects agreed that there was a lack of proper planning and evaluation by the subcontractor before engaging in large scale work. They were supposed to dig small potholes to identify locations before they did major excavation work, but instead they proceeded with the major excavation only to find that things were mislocated. These were errors that should not have happened but which would have been mitigated had they done the preliminary work. They also ordered and had delivered some items that were not actually supposed to be ordered for the projects, such as some large vaults and things that were actually slated for other projects. This was brought up at a separate meeting. Those were removed and subsequently replaced. They started some other work without the proper permitting from the City of Lacey, who then put a stop work on them. Essentially, there were a litany of issues that all compounded.
- The culmination was that on May 30th, Chief Frost was notified by the mechanics at the shop that the subcontractor was loading up all their equipment and leaving the site. There was no notification of this. On May 31st, there was an inquiry back and forth between the contractor and subcontractor about a vault that was supposed to arrive this week that has not yet been seen. There was an email forwarded back from the subcontractor saying that they were not going to fulfill their obligations under the contract and they vacated the site and would not be continuing.
- There is probably not more than 50% completion because there is still a lot of excavation work to do for the actual ground pad for the building itself. There is a lot of other infrastructure work. This is concerning. Chief Cerovski has been in communication via email with the general contractor along with the architects and engineers. The general contractor's initial response was not indicative of them taking full ownership of their responsibility in managing this relationship. Chief Brooks has asked Chief Frost and Chief Cerovski to set up a conversation with the architects and engineers along with legal counsel in advance of the next meeting with the general contractor, which is scheduled for June 7th.
- In all of the area around the shop itself, there is a stop work until next Wednesday because of the lack of a subcontractor. There is a separate subcontractor who is doing infrastructure work along the frontage on

Steilacoom Road to run fiber connectivity through the new station and then connect to the tech and the new shop. That contractor has been very responsive and is doing great work.

- At the next fire commissioners meeting, there may be a call for an executive session, after talking with legal counsel and the general contractor. Legal counsel may be present to brief the board.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Levy Lid Restoration

- Working with the contractor to try to finalize the video.
- Proof back on the information flier that Chris DeBell was working on. She is out on vacation this week. Will work on refinements next week to have that finalized, and it will be circulated among the board via email.
- There was notification by the Pro committee that there had been an Against statement submitted. There was dialogue among the members of the For committee developing their rebuttal statement, which was due by 4:30 today. Chief Brooks will get a copy once it has been submitted to circulate back to the commissioners. It is unclear whether there was a rebuttal submitted from the Against. There may not be notification of that; they may not be required to share the rebuttals ahead of the publication of the voters pamphlet. There was some indication or impression that the statements may have been AI-generated.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Chief Schmidt reported:

- There was a fire on May 31st at the former Ostrom's Mushroom Farm. Crews were on scene in less than four minutes. It was confirmed to be a commercial structure fire. It was upgraded to a second alarm, as the building is a bit of a maze with many hazards. There were responses from seven other agencies to help assist, including JBLM. There was a great response from chiefs who were going off-duty. Chief Hulse came in and ran battalion. Chief Brooks was on call and responded to the scene to help assist. Chief Harn managed the scene. Chief Flowers and Chief Berman were also present. Chief Schmidt was the public information officer.
- Crews did a great job on this complex fire. There was a water system issue due to water being shut off to the hydrants at the facility. Battling the fire continued on through the night, with a roof collapse, fire walls that were protecting the area of origin.
- Partnering with Lacey PD and Terry McDaniel and Asher Cabe from the city came to give support.
- Lacey PD did announce that they had a suspect in custody. They used a drone to fly in to help figure out where the origin of the fire was to make the case for the arrest.

- The units have now been able to leave. Rotating crews are going in to check back in on it. The city was able to arrange with the building owner to set up for some excavation to be done with in a week to help get further in and minimize the potential for safety issues for anyone that might enter and minimize risk for subsequent fires.
- Chief Crimmins had another fire that went off this morning at 8:15 off of Gregory Lane. There was a detached garage with a carport connected to that with a couple of vehicles in it, with a fire breaking out in the carport area. Crews arrived and found a victim next to the vehicles. Chief Crimmins' crew has remained on scene working with Thurston County Sheriff's Department and the coroner to figure out the origin and cause of the fire. They have turned the scene over.
- Commission Kelling queried whether the suspect at the Ostrom fire was arrested on site or off site. Chief Schmidt confirmed that the suspect was arrested today off site.
- Chief Brooks reported that he will be leaving town on June 8th, returning on June 19th. The deputy chiefs will be present for the fire commissioners meeting on June 15th, with the plan of limiting the agenda as many of the commissioners will also be absent.
- Chief Brooks reported that, coming into the budget planning season, working on the with and without levy restoration. Director Hough has been watching closely the benefit cost, which is a significant percentage of the personnel cost. The Fire Commissioners Association changed networks at the beginning of the year, going from First Choice to Cigna. Because of a class action of complaints (primarily a lack of in-network providers in the area) they are reverting back to First Choice in August of this year due to many complaints and concerns. There will be no change to this year's premium rates associated with this change back; they are honoring the current premium rates, even though originally the change from First Choice to Sigma was to avert an 11% increase that would have been assessed. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect increases going into next year. Dale just received some information from the Association of Washington Cities today that put a range for healthcare cost anticipated increases next year between 4-9%. The collective bargaining agreement has some triggers above 6% that will require discussions with labor group.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Gamble – no comments.

Commissioner Hetzler – no comments

Commissioner Kelling – saw some construction on the edge of Station 34, likely the landscaping work that was referenced. Was there ever resolution with the City of Lacey on the right-of-way and the drainage?

Chief Brooks responded that there has been no resolution, but they met with the city today about that issue. It is now a mutual issue because the city is wanting to expand their right-of-way to include the need for an easement on the connecting land that sits between LFD3 property and the RAC. The city wants to put sidewalks through there, so there needs to be an agreement on easement access for that. The discussion about how to deal with stormwater issues and related things relative to that easement was introduced today again. They are moving forward with their frontage improvements, so it is timely to continue working on that.

Commissioner Kelling also inquired about the homeless encampment that off of the Sleater Kinney on ramp. It appeared that the City of Olympia started to clean it up and got halfway through and then stopped, then came back, then stopped again. The result is a number of individual homeless encampments on the City of Lacey side of the overpass.

Chief Brooks reported that he would follow up on this. Lacey's teams have been very diligent in addressing homeless encampments.

Commissioner Kelling also inquired about the opening schedule for the Days Inn. Chief Schmidt reported she has a meeting regarding this on June 5th. The latest information is that they are planning on opening in June and will likely be full, with a capacity of around 118.

Commissioner Kelling also asked if the funding for the video was coming from leftover funding with the recruitment video contractor. Chief Brooks clarified that this was one of three pending proposals for the same video creator, so the cost has already been covered. The third will likely be more promotional materials particularly once the new website is up.

Commissioner Roberts – the Lacey Fun Fest was a lot of fun. The fire crews did a great job with the kids. Chief Schmidt reported that it wasn't expected for the bounce house to be so popular, as well as the high interest in stickers and helmets. It was determined that a crew of two is inadequate and it will be staffed with a crew of four going forward.

Commissioner Roberts also asked about the Juneteenth celebration at the RAC, which includes a barbecue and other activities. Chief Brooks reported that nothing has been communicated to LFD3 regarding this.

X. CORRESPONDENCE

Chief Brooks shared the annual proclamation notice from the Thurston County Commissioners adopted the 9th of May which declared last week, May 21st through 27th, the official National Recognition of the Emergency Medical Services Week.

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:08 PM.

***Next Regular Meeting: June 15th, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.***

Chair

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Liberty Hetzler

6/16/2023

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Commissioner

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Commissioner

6/19/2023

Vice Chair

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Melissa Gamble

7/21/2023

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Commissioner

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Steve Brooks

6/16/2023

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ATTEST: District Secretary