THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

June 4, 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:
Comissionner Kelling Commissioner Kirkbride Commissioner Gamble Commissioner Roberts Commissioners Hetzler		

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 Kelling
Carried: Unanimous

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft minutes of the May 21, 2026, Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.
B. Warrants (AP 6A 2026):

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630): EFTs numbered 5799 through 5802; checks numbered 24905 through 24914 for a total amount of $68,026.86.
- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: EFTs numbered 5803; checks numbered 24915 through 24917 for a total amount of $114,646.77.

C. Payroll 5B-2026 in the amount of $800,629.80.

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

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One
Commissioner Kirkbride reported:

- Thurston County EMS Council met last Thursday. There are some changes to the bylaws regarding conflict of interest. When the first draft came out, it stated that a vote could not be made if there was a conflict of interest that affected the voter personally or who the voter represents. The language has been modified to refer only to personal conflicts of interest.
- There was a reappointment to West Region of Wendy Hill from TCOMM.
- Yesterday there was a quarterly West Region meeting. Commissioner Kirkbride represents Thurston County EMS Council at that meeting. This meeting consists mostly of reports and sharing about studies that are going on. These meetings are open if anyone would like to listen in. Of note, on a per capita basis, Aberdeen has the highest death rate from drug overdose in the state.
- The next meeting for the EMS Council is June 25th.

B. Thurston 9-1-1 Communications (TCOMM)
No report; the June meeting was canceled, and the next meeting will take place on July 2nd.

C. City/District Liaison
The next meeting is scheduled for July 16th.

D. LFD3/EOFD ILA Committee
The next meeting is scheduled for July 30th.

E. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association
The next meeting is scheduled for June 16th.

F. Thurston Regional Planning Council
The next meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. Commissioner Kelling will be unable to attend the July 10th meeting and will need a designated backup to attend.

G. Community Outreach
Chris DeBell reported:

- Continuing to maintain an active outreach calendar. Last week, LFD3 supported the Annual North Thurston School District Day of Champions event, providing EMS standby and cheering on the participating athletes.

- Chief Roberts visited a forensic science class at Nisqually Middle School to provide an overview of the role and responsibilities of fire investigators and what they do.
- Yesterday, Engine 33 attended Woodland Elementary School Bike Festival where the crews engaged and promoted safe cycling practices.
- At Station 31, there have been five bicycle helmet fittings and seven car seat installations.
- Social media growth continues to climb. People are interacting more with the content. In the last 30 days, Facebook interactions have been up 114%. Instagram interactions have been up 153%. Posts were viewed more than 182,000 on Facebook and 45,000 on Instagram. Social media posts are reaching more people outside of the regular audience, which has led to interaction from non-followers on Facebook, which increased by 141%. More and more community members who may not already be connected to the district are seeing the content and engaging with it.
- The content that consistently performs the highest are emergency responses, rescues, training, and day-to-day firefighter activities. The high point views for the last month are the duckling rescue posts with 33,000 views and the structure fire on May 14th at 39,000 views.

H. Operations and Logistics

Chief Patti shared:

- Lacey participated in four days of mass casualty incident training. This took place at the Olympia Brewery. The drill was hosted by the Olympia Fire Department. The three city departments rotate hosting an MCI drill each year. They held eight total drills over four days. There was a crew from LFD3 at each of the drills. It was a great experience for the crews and there was good feedback on how the event went.
- With the lieutenant hiring process, currently in the 10-day challenging period. This will end on June 6th.
- Nearing the completion of the SSRA. The BCs are going to begin to work on getting the new recruits assigned.
- Planning continues for the big July 3rd event.
- The Logistics team continues to work alongside Safety. Right now, the big project is identifying and dealing with the items that were identified during the L&I walkthrough. The logistics team and Chief Foggarty have been working extremely hard. Lacey is about 95% complete. Logistics will then turn their attention over to District 6.
- The new Aid 31 has been placed at Station 31 but is not in service yet. It needs a software update for the gurney in order to function correctly.
- Aid 33 is in service at Station 33 and has gotten very positive reviews from the crews.
- Engine 31 is still sitting in the bay, waiting on the last few pieces of equipment. It also needs to go back to the shop for a couple of items. The goal is to have it in service in the next couple of weeks.
- Commissioner Hetzler asked for more information about the lieutenant 10-day challenging period. Chief Schmidt responded that this is part of the

agreement with the bargaining unit. Whenever there is a testing cycle, once the test is completed, there is a 10-day period of time when the members who went through the testing can contest if they had concerns about the process or the scoring.

I. Standards and Resilience

Chief Cerovski shared:

- At Week 15 of 21 for the academy. The next couple of weeks will be spent on supplemental training responsibilities and tasks such as writing reports and understanding requirements for maintenance and cleanup as well as record keeping for training.
- Community Risk Reduction: still in the final works of the symposium scheduled for July 15th. There will be workshop panels for discussion of issues related to inspections and business owners in the community.
- Safety and Compliance: regarding the L&I report, all of the items identified will be closed out on Monday and a final report will be sent to L&I to be in full compliance with their identified issues by June 8th. At that point, focus will shift to nonidentified issues such as refining policies and procedures related to safety and compliance, including reviewing the Safety Accident and Prevention Program.
- The process of identifying a firm to serve as Owner's Representative is underway. Five firms submitted packets to LFD3. That list was narrowed down to three firms, who have been invited to come in on June 12th to give a presentation and be interviewed. The three firms are Barker Creek Consulting, Consensus, and Turner & Townsend Heery.
- Commissioner Hetzler asked for more information about what the process of interviewing the three firms will look like. Chief Cerovski stated that the panel will spend an hour with each firm. The firms will present for about 25 minutes, followed by a 20-minute Q&A.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. First Reading of Proposed Bond Measure Resolution Staff

Chief Kirkwood presented the draft ballot that will be presented to the voters. These statements have been reviewed and vetted by the Bond Council at Foster Garvey for the commissioners to review and give comments. There is an allowance of 75 words for the ballot title and of 175 words for the explanatory statement.

Commissioner Kirkbride made a comment regarding a statement in the Explanatory Statement that reads, "LFD3 provides fire, rescue, and emergency services to the City of Lacey and portions of Thurston County." Commissioner Kirkbride stated that LFD3 does not provide service to the City of Lacey. The people in the City of Lacey are in the district. This may read

negatively to people in the county. He suggested changing the language to "service to Lacey and the surrounding areas." Commissioner Kelling suggesting making it more of a geographic reference rather than services to a municipality.

Chief Schmidt asked Chief Kirkwood the best way to send feedback on this document. It was agreed that questions and comments can be sent to Chris DeBell by the commissioners. Chief Schmidt requested feedback to be sent in by June 12th.

Commissioner Roberts suggested a change in sentence structure in the middle paragraph. The phrase about the benefits of the project should first say that they will improve response to emergency call volumes and then state second that it will improve firefighter health and safety.

Commissioner Kirkbride asked when this will be filed with the county. Chief Kirkwood responded that the deadline is August 4th.

B. Community Advisory Committee Briefing Staff

Chief Schmidt reported:

- There were many volunteers for the group, which currently consists of seven active participants.
- The first meeting took place on May 22nd for two hours. It consisted first of a State of the District presentation covering call volume and explaining all of the ways in which LFD3 serves the community. There are two more individuals who are expected to be able to join at the next meeting.
- The second meeting is scheduled for June 8th at 5 p.m. Chief Kirkwood will present at that meeting with a deep dive into the financials, the health of the organizations, the long-term projections, and how this bond will help support the community.
- The Communications team and social media specialist have been very focused on educating members and educating the community. There are some samples for the Community Advisory Group of what that messaging will look like.
- Everything is going well so far, and a similar methodology will most likely be followed by East Olympia sometime in the fall.
- Commissioner Kirkbride asked for more information about the demographics of the committee. Chief Schmidt shared that there is a great deal of diversity. The group includes representation of military service, medical backgrounds, government work, school district, and private business.
- So far there has been a suggestion to focus in upgrades to existing fire stations and development of new station(s). The general public has less of an understanding of the needs for training and logistics. The general public has a greater understanding of items such as seeing crews on the road, response times, and ability to be present for emergencies and manage scenes. The committee felt that these issues

should be the focus of the messaging rather than focusing on the support side of things.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Schmidt reported:

- At the most recent County Chiefs Meeting, Thurston County Auditor Mary Hall was present to give an address. The chiefs were told this was going to be regarding billing changes to how elections are managed in the county. Mary Hall took the time to let the chiefs know how costs for elections are passed off in the county to individual entities.
- Last year, the two commissioner election spots had a bill come through in 2026 (although the elections were in 2025) with a total cost of about $64,000.
- Mary Hall explained that the way Thurston County bills for the overall election cost is fairly standard in the state. They have an equation that they use with the population of the service area and how many ballot items are on each election.
- In Thurston County, there has always been more focus on cost recovery of election costs, so bills come through afterwards. What has not been done in the past is billing for overhead (for county staff, software, voter registration management). Thurston County is trying to be more budget-minded and is looking at going to a model where full recovery is realized.
- Most likely, election costs are going to go up in the future. Mary Hall had a spreadsheet and was able to share with them information from last year's elections what costs might have been had this model been in place at that time. Lacey would have been responsible for about $102,000 (a significant increase).
- She also shared that general elections will be cheaper because there are more ballot items. Odd years typically fare better for costs of elections. The state is now taking its share of their costs.
- The entire presentation was very eye-opening for Chief Schmidt and Chief Kirkwood. LFD3 is in the top three in the county as far as anticipated costs.
- When moving forward and considering items in the future outside of normal elected positions, these changes will be important to consider.
- Chief Schmidt gave feedback at that meeting that it would be valuable if the county would consider a tiered approach to this change in over a period of time, rather than going to the 100% model at year one. An incremental increase over the next several years would give time to figure out how the costs will affect budgets.
- Chief Kirkwood looked at the bill for last year and reported that the bill to LFD3 was $64,000 for the general election. The cost was about $9,000 for the pamphlet, for a total of close to $71,000.
- Commissioner Kelling inquired if the decision will be made in advance of the budget submission. Chief Schmidt responded that the exact timeframe for the county making this decision is not entirely clear. The hope at this

time is that the information is being shared very early and that there will be an interval of time before it takes effect.

- Moving to the next item of the administrative report: the Nisqually Tribe is going to be doing an upgrade and remodel on the Redwind Casino with the addition of 70,000 square feet to the facility.
- The State Chiefs reached out to LFD3 and all of the partner agencies to give notification that a law firm is filing a class action lawsuit against the three major fire apparatus producers. They sent a memorandum that Chief Schmidt can forward to the board. They are bringing forward the fact that fire truck prices have doubled in the last ten years. Average pumpers are now exceeding $1 million. Wait times have increased from 18 months to 4 years. The manufacturers specifically noted are Oshkosh, REV Group, and Rosenbauer America. It has been hard for all fire organizations to keep up with the costs and the timelines that are being provided. There is concern about public safety risks because of the timelines, as well as severely strained budgets. One specific example was offered. The Oshkosh Fire Department purchased two identical engines in 2020 for $639,000. In 2026, they purchased an identical engine with the same statistics and that engine cost $1,142,000. Essentially, the price had nearly doubled in four years. The allegations against the manufacturers are price fixing, production suppression, market manipulation, and information sharing. Investigation has led to the belief that manufacturers are speaking amongst each other and intentionally slowing things down. This is believed to date back to 2016 and was actively happening in 2025. This law firm is looking for people who want to be engaged in looking at remedies that could include additional damage and overpayment recovery. LFD3 qualifies to participate in this lawsuit. There is also at least one apparatus at East Olympia that qualifies. Staff's recommendation would be, if the board feels comfortable, to reach back to the state chiefs to express interest in participating, as well as having a conversation with legal counsel. The question to the commissioners is whether they feel comfortable with staff doing more investigation as to whether this is appropriate to pursue. The commissioners all agreed on moving forward.
- Chief Schmidt, Commissioner Roberts, and Commissioner Hetzler attended the Thurston County Commissioners Training on Immigration, an opportunity for collaboration and alignment of what agencies are doing. It was a good opportunity to understand what immigration procedures look like and what agencies in the surrounding areas are doing.
- Chiefs Updates with staff have been ongoing. This is an internal education campaign. The media specialist designed a wonderful PowerPoint with information about bonds, as well as do's and don'ts for elections. Shortly after all of the members have been educated, the efforts will begin to start engaging the public.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kelling – apologies for missing the last meeting; had an opportunity to read the notes and is very thankful for the work that the Support

Services Division is doing. Listened to the Thurston County Summar Hazards presentation a week or so ago. There were presentations about the weather forecast from the summer and from PSE and ORCAA. Chief Johnson from McLane Black Lake gave the fire outlook. There is an increased fire risk this summer with above normal temperatures and below average precipitation, as well as a reduced snowpack. Fire.airnow.gov is a helpful resource combining information about fire and air quality.

Commissioner Roberts – the immigration presentation was incredibly informative and really appreciated the City of Lacey and the Sheriff's Office. It was very affirming that LFD3 is doing exactly what is needed. The Community Awards Assembly is in September; has the board done something in the past? Chris DeBell and Chief Schmidt clarified that the commissioners have not been excluded from this. Commissioner Roberts will need to be excused from the July 16th meeting.

Commissioner Gamble – very thorough administrative report with lots of good information.

Commissioner Kirkbride – at every meeting, there is more and more about the outstanding job that members of this agency do. It is an exciting time to be a part of this organization.

Commissioner Hetzler – the country training on immigration was interesting, informative, and collaborative. It was very well done. As a reminder, timesheets will be done at the end of this month. At the July 16th meeting, Commissioners Kelling and Roberts will both be gone.

X. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Correspondence
Chief Schmidt reported:

- Over the last couple of years, staff has tried to be more forward facing with community groups that come in and use space at the fire stations. Efforts have been made to share with groups that use the rooms that food and beverages are prohibited. Recently, a group that has been using the space for a long time has been very upset about the rules prohibiting food and beverages. There were several exchanges with this group regarding the rules. In the last correspondence, they were very upset and were going to be looking for another facility. The Facility Use Agreement was shared with the commissioners; this is the form that groups must sign when they use the facility space. All of the commissioners agreed that the rules are reasonable and should stay in place.

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:32 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: June 18, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.

Liberty Hetzler (06/22/2026 13:28:01 PDT)

Chair

Vice Chair

Melissa Gamble (06/25/2026 09:52:30 PDT)

Commissioner

Sylvia Roberts (06/22/2026 21:46:00 PDT)

Commissioner

Richard Kelling (06/22/2026 17:17:44 PDT)

Commissioner

ATTEST: District Secretary

06 04 26 BoFC Meeting Minutes Final

Final Audit Report 2026-06-25

Created:	2026-06-22 (Pacific Daylight Time)
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2026-06-25 - 9:52:07 AM PDT

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2026-06-25 - 9:52:28 AM PDT

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