THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

August 6, 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 Hetzler Commissioner Kirkbride Commissioner Roberts Commissioner Kelling		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.

After calling the meeting to order, Commissioner Hetzler gave a short statement about the loss of LFD3 Firefighter Jake Johnson.

II. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

Local 2903 President Lt. Jim Greene spoke, thanking Commissioner Hetzler for her words about Jake Johnson and sharing more about the challenge this has been for LFD3.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft minutes of July 16, 2026, Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.
B. Warrants (AP 8A 2026):

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630); EFTs numbered 5828 through 5838; checks numbered 24993 through 25001 for a total amount of $160,331.92.

- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: EFTs numbered 5839 through 5840; check numbered 25002 for a total amount of $10,875.00.
- 2025 Capital Projects Fund 309: EFTs numbered 5841 for a total amount of $16,403.15.

C. Payroll 7B-2026 in the amount of $790,196.77.

There was a question about the warrant for a $6,000 consulting fee for Neil Blindheim. In the early stages of talking about potential mergers, this individual was identified as someone who specialized in fire service benefit charge calculations. He also gives recommendations about what funding looks like. There was an initial meeting with him in April, and his recommendation was to look at the greater county data. He pulls data from all the agencies and creates a tool to look at and see what things might look like in five or ten years if agencies were to merge.

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

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One
No report; the next meeting will take place on August 27th.

B. Thurston 9-1-1 Communications (TCOMM)
No report; the next meeting will take place on September 2nd.

C. City/District Liaison
No report; the next meeting will take place on September 17th.

D. LFD3/EOFD ILA Committee
No report; the next meeting will take place in August. The meeting that was supposed to take place last week was postponed, and a date for a meeting in August has not yet been set.

E. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association
No report; as Commissioner Gamble is still not present.

F. Thurston Regional Planning Council
No report; the next meeting will take place on September 4th.

G. Community Outreach
Chris DeBell reported:
- There have been a variety of outreach engagements. On July 23rd, a duty crew dropped in on the 6th Annual Mermaid Festival at the fairgrounds, where crews engaged with the participants there.

- The Thurston County Fair wrapped up this past Sunday. LFD3 provided EMS standby and outreach for the four days of the fair.
- From July 31st to August 4th, Engine 32 participated daily at the Medicine Creek Canoe Journey. There was a lot of good feedback from the crews about the engagement of the attendees there, many of which were from tribes across the region.
- August 4th was National Night Out. LFD3 visited 12 neighborhoods in the district with Engines 31, 34, and 35. The on-duty BCs were all out, as were Chief Schmidt, Chief Carson, and Chief Cerovski.
- At Station 31, three community members were assisted with car seat installations. There were a few bicycle helmet fittings. There was also one walk-in station tour.
- Communication updates: the fifth of the bond measure informational videos was posted on Monday. There has been an ongoing trend on social media of non-follower views, which equates to a wider reach across the community.
- Over the next month or so during an upcoming meeting, the multimedia relations specialist, Tiffany Baldwin, will come in to provide a more comprehensive overview of the communications program and the changes and enhancements that have been made over the last year since she has been on board.

H. Operations:

In Chief Carson's absence, Chief Patti shared:

- On July 20th, crews responded to a multifamily apartment complex fire on Pacific Avenue. This was the third active structure fire dispatch response in the span of about 45 minutes. This was a bathroom fire that was quickly extinguished with no extension and no injuries to occupants or firefighters. There were also mutual aid engines from Olympia.
- On July 23rd, crews responded to Woodland Creek for a residential structure fire in a garage. The fire extended into the home, causing extensive damage to the house. There were no injuries to occupants or firefighters, but the family of three was displaced from the house. The Red Cross was contacted for them.
- On July 28th, crews responded to Mullen Road for a well-involved attached garage fire. Six individuals were displaced, as they had been using the garage as living space. They were connected with services.
- Engine 32 spent five days with the Tribe for the Canoe Journey.
- Four newly promoted lieutenants have begun this week. Their badge pinning is planned to take place at the August 20th meeting.
- Commissioner Kelling inquired if any of the structure fires involved lithium batteries. Chief Patti responded that he is not aware that any of them were caused by lithium batteries.

I. Logistics

Chief Patti reported:

- The parking lot resealing project is underway. The goal is to have it completed by tomorrow or Monday.
- Next week, the annual hose and ladder testing will be done in conjunction with Pacific Northwest Hydro. This is a fairly sizeable project for the Logistics team. Every piece of hose and every ladder in the district goes through the testing process, which requires Logistics to be moving apparatus around, making sure there are reserve apparatus to put in place, etc. Chief Frost's ultimate goal is that the duty crews do not feel the pressure of hose testing.
- The old Engine 31, which was replaced with a new engine, has come back from the body shop. It is currently at the shop getting a few other repairs done. The hope is that in the next two to three weeks, it will get into the reserve rotation.
- The reserve ladder truck was delivered to Hughes Fire this week. The old motor will be pulled out so that when the new motor arrives, it will be ready to go.

J. Standards and Resilience

Chief Cerovski reported:

- Community Risk Reduction:
  - An after-action review for the Insurance Symposium is in the works. There will be a report on that at the end of the month.
  - Enjoying the relationship with the Nisqually Tribe. They reached out and asked for a review of their remodel of the Redwind Casino. It was an opportunity for CRR to showcase some important things, including access and egress, both during the construction process as well as for the remodel work. They are having a groundbreaking on August 14th to celebrate the remodel process.
- Safety and Compliance:
  - Every year in the fall, LifeScan physicals take place. LifeScan will be out October 13th – November 6th. The planning process is underway to get crews ready and assigned.
  - The team has been working with Tiffany Baldwin to create new return-to-work videos so that when members are out on extended leave, they better understand the return-to-work process.
- Capital Projects:
  - The District has entered into the contract with Turner & Townsend Heery for owner representative services. Work will begin with them on the projects at Stations 31 and 33 and the other forecasted projects.
  - The Capital Facilities draft plan has been received. The draft is being reviewed for final comments and should be completed by the end of the month.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Bond Updates

Chief Schmidt reported:

- All deadlines with the county for filing have been met. The bond is officially Proposition 1 for November 3rd.
- In response to soliciting for For and Against, people have come forward for the For group. Nobody has come forward for the Against group, and the county will do their own solicitation for that.
- Still working on communications. Additional videos are coming out, and there are speaking opportunities in the future to address the bond issue publicly.
- There was information that came forward from the primaries on August 4th. Poulsbo Fire was doing a bond and were approved at over 70%. Agencies looking at RFAs and EMS levy lid lifts appear to be receiving yeses and even super majorities in many cases. Southeast Thurston had theirs approved at just under 70%. West Thurston was not able to approve theirs.
- An agency in Pierce County, District 10, which is the Fife area, had a bond measure up for just over $25 million. They had an approval of over 70%, and they specifically called out a project that requires procuring property and building and supplying a new station. This is a good comparable to what LFD3 is planning with the upcoming bond. It demonstrates that the goals and intentions of LFD3 are on par with other agencies and these goals are being supported by other communities.
- Commissioner Kirkbride asked if there has been any communication with other agencies, such as Pierce County District 10, about how they communicated with their voters. Chief Schmidt reported that LFD3 has been observing how these agencies are communicating publicly with their voters, and that some of the tactics and efforts are being mimicked by LFD3. LFD3's multimedia specialist is doing a lot of this work.

B. Policy Keep Washington Working E-207 Board Discussion/Action

Chief Schmidt reported:

- The background of this policy goes back to many months ago when there was ICE activity on LFD3 property, followed by community members coming forward and asking about LFD3's procedures and policies around this situation. There had previously been no experience with LFD3 interacting with federal agents.
- At the last meeting, a new district security policy was approved, L-100.2. The focus of that policy was a procedure that LFD3 had already been following for some time relating to security measures, emergency procedures, etc. This policy also addressed things

pertinent to outside groups coming in, such as station accessibility. Members of the board and members of staff have been engaging at the county level with partner agencies and participating in trainings. One of the recommended best practices was to have a standalone policy to guide how LFD3 interacts and aligns with Keep Washington Working law.

- The Keep Washington Working policy has very specific principles or rules of engagement for members. Staff created this policy because it clearly states how members engage with federal agents and gives them clear direction. If ever asked about it, LFD3 can now provide this policy.
- Commissioner Kelling asked for clarification on whether this policy changes anything that took place at the last meeting and if this policy is in line with other law enforcement and EMS agencies in the county. Chief Schmidt responded in the affirmative and clarified that legal counsel was sought in the creation of this policy.
- Commissioner Kirkbride shared his opposition to the wording of this policy. A policy that says that RCW10.93.160 is recognized is perfectly fine, but to go into the details of that makes it appear that LFD3 is becoming like a police agency. LFD3 needs to stay focused on serving the public. The concern is whether this will stop here. Commissioner Kirkbride shared that while doing research on this issue, he came across an interesting set of RCWs, and this particular RCW is in total opposition to two other RCWs that talk specifically about federal police action and their ability to do what they want to do, including entering LFD3 facilities. RCW 10.53 is very specifically about law enforcement, not about fire districts. It should never come across to anyone that LFD3 has police power. The wording of the policy feels like an overreach and it would be preferable to say that all federal, state, and local laws are recognized and respected, and at the same time, security procedures are in place such that all law enforcement is welcome to public spaces but must have a warrant or some legal reason to go beyond that. This would be more appropriate than mentioning one specific law, which is at conflict with other RCWs, one of which states that it is a misdemeanor to impede the work of a policy officer.
- Commissioner Kelling shared that he does not interpret this policy in the same way as Commissioner Kirkbride but is very interested in the research he described and the other RCWs mentioned. Taking a broader approach toward a similar outcome, which does not call out specific federal organizations, would be a win. This policy is still giving the members very clear guidance without calling out specific actions.
- Commissioner Roberts expressed understanding of the challenge of seeing conflicting RCWs, but this policy has been reviewed by legal counsel. Policy ought to be very broad, while procedures ought to be very specific. Some of the principles on the second page are perhaps

more procedural. The intent of this policy is to ensure that LFD3's firefighters, EMTs, and paramedics have clear guidance on what to do.

- Chief Schmidt suggested that perhaps staff can switch this policy back to a procedure. The primary concern is that staff knows how to behave in these particular situations to work with law enforcement partners in the appropriate way. Perhaps looking at a broader procedure would be more helpful.
- Commissioner Kirkbride opined that the procedures that are within the security policy that deal with access to facilities would be an appropriate place to add these procedures.
- Chief Cerovski asked Commissioner Kirkbride to share the RCWs in conflict so that they can be reviewed.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Schmidt reported:

- The outreach and presence of the commissioners amidst the loss of Firefighter Jake Johnson has been incredible. The union and local agencies had an incredibly supportive response for Firefighter Johnson's family. There has been outreach from Medic One, T-Comm, law enforcement agencies, etc. LFD3 is working with his family on a memorial which will likely be at the end of the month.
- Social media has been utilized to share about Firefighter Johnson's accident and passing. The posts have had a very large reach and the community support has been incredible. His previous agency, Mountain View Fire and Rescue, has connected with LFD3, and they have also been very involved in supporting his family and in planning for his memorial.
- The post-incident analysis for the 3rd of July event has taken place. Cell phone tower data was pulled to determine how many people attended. Estimates based on cell phones that were pinged are that 40,000 people attended.
- LFD3 was notified by the Nisqually Tribe vice chairwoman that Ken Choke, their chairman, had passed on the 4th of August. The district has drafted a condolence letter to send on behalf of the agency and the Board of Commissioners.
- Reminder, there is a BoFC workshop on the calendar for September 24th at 5:30 p.m.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kelling – sometimes the strength of the community is demonstrated through tragedy. Thanks to the chair for expressing the sentiments of the board relating the recent tragic event. In the midst of this event, seeing the strength of the community has been meaningful.

Commissioner Roberts – thank you hardly seems enough to say, but it is extremely heartfelt. The support of this agency and all the agencies throughout the state has been remarkable. Very appreciative of all the reports that people give.

Commissioner Kirkbride – appreciative of the comments and the reactions around the recent loss. All of the members of Lacey Fire are terrific individuals and a wonderful team. LFD3 is unique as other fire districts don't operate in the same way. The Chief's communications were really helpful. Thank you to the chair for the comments at the beginning of tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Hetzler – nothing to add.

X. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Correspondence
None.

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

XII. EXECUTIVE 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 began at 6:14 PM and was scheduled to take 15 minutes.

The executive session ended at 6:30 PM. No action was taken.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:30 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: August 20, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.

Liberty Hetzler (08/31/2026 15:25:26 PDT)
Chair

Vice Chair

Melissa Gamble
Melissa Gamble (09/03/2026 09:14:57 PDT)
Commissioner

Sylvia Roberts (08/31/2026 19:04:53 PDT)
Commissioner

Commissioner

ATTEST: District Secretary

08 06 26 BoFC Meeting Minutes Final

Final Audit Report 2026-09-03

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