

**THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE**

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**August 7th, 2025**

The meeting was conducted remotely via Zoom and with in-person attendance at Station 31.  
1231 Franz St SE, Lacey, WA 98516

| <b>Present:</b>                                                        | <b>Present (Virtual):</b> | <b>Excused:</b>     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Commissioner Kirkbride<br>Commissioner Roberts<br>Commissioner Hetzler | 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.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

- **MOTION:** To approve the agenda as published subject to the postponement of the new business item regarding policy review until the August 21 meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride

Second: Commissioner Roberts

Carried: Unanimous

**III. PROMOTIONAL PINNING AND SWEARING IN CEREMONY AND VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

- Lieutenant Kevin Davenport was sworn into his new position.
- ISU Operators were recognized by the Training Division for their support and participation and SSRA training events.

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

Jonathan Clemens addressed the commissioners as a district resident and as an occupational medicine clinician.

- Since 2018, the State of Washington has advanced a number of different positive measures to provide care for first responders with PTSD.

- On August 1<sup>st</sup>, the State Department of Labor and Industries working group published some proposed guidelines for PTSD. This would determine how the state spends money to care for any injured worker, including first responders, with PTSD.
- In these guidelines, there is a default prohibition on sending Washington workers with PTSD out of state to treatment programs, which would include places like Deer Hollow or the IFF Center of Excellence in Maryland.
- Mr. Clements shared his deep concern about this and its impact on the first responder community. He encouraged the commissioners to review the proposed guidelines for PTSD. Public comment will be open for several more weeks. He offered to be available to engage further with the commissioners on this topic if needed/desired.

Chief Schmidt shared that Director Gorman also has information on this topic and that the staff is looking into how the agency can best respond to this situation. The Firefighters Local also wants to be involved in sharing their opinion.

## **V. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Draft minutes of the July 17, 2025, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.
- B. Warrants (AP 8A 2025):
  - General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5614 through 5642; checks numbered 24512 through 24535; drafts numbered 1604 through 1619 for a total amount of \$1,334,152.78.
  - Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: EFTs numbered 5625 through 5626; checks numbered 24536 through 24537 for a total amount of \$484,017.24.
  - Capital Projects Fund 301: Check numbered 24538 for a total amount of \$5,918.48.
- C. Payroll 7B-2025 in the amount of \$702,017.52.

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

Motion: Commissioner Roberts

Second: Commissioner Kelling

Carried: Unanimous

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Thurston County Medic One  
Commissioner Kirkbride reported from the July 24<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- The major event of the meeting was the final adoption of 2026-2027 budget.
- By far the biggest expenses are the contracts with Lacey, Tumwater, and Olympia.
- The budget had to be sent to the county by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. There are expenses in the budget that are county-related, but the county has not yet closed out 2024, and the numbers are not available for 2025 or 2026, which results in some holes in the budget until the county completes the work on their end.
- The budget will be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, along with all the rest of the Thurston County budget, in late December.
- The new business item was regarding the hiring of a quality assurance person who began last September. She has been looking at the entire Medic One operation, the job assignments, ways to improve the services provided, etc. She has done phenomenal work. She has changed 20 to 30 different things to improve the efficiency of the agency, and the entire focus of the Medic One staff is changing. The principal focus will be on serving the agency, serving the contractors and the districts. There is also a separate group focused only on the operations of the agency. This is streamlining how everything functions. She provided an outline of what she is going to be doing over the next 12 months, which will further advance the efficiency of the agency as a whole.
- The next meeting is scheduled for the last week in August.

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

The August 6<sup>th</sup> meeting was canceled. The next meeting is scheduled for September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

C. City/District Liaison

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 18<sup>th</sup>.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

The next meeting is scheduled for August 19<sup>th</sup>, and that will be the annual potluck at Lake Lawrence.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council

Chief Cerovski is absent this week; there will be a report at the next meeting.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Schmidt shared:

- On July 24<sup>th</sup>, there was an engine tour at Lacey Elementary for South Sound YMCA for K – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
- The Thurston County Fair took place from July 31<sup>st</sup> through August 3<sup>rd</sup>. There was an EMS standby crew as well as community outreach.

- On August 5<sup>th</sup>, there were several crews as well as several executive staff who attended National Night Out. There was one at an apartment complex off of Carpenter, which Engine 31, Battalion 31, and executive staff attended before moving on to McAllister Park, where they were having a very nice event. The final event of the night was at Jubilee. There were close to 100 people there.
- At the front desk there have been several helmet fittings.

#### G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Schmidt shared:

- The timeline on the aid units is going to be mid-August for their arrival at Hughes. They will be outfitted in September. Aid Unit 33 will go in service and then Aid Unit 31.
- Engine 31's final inspection is to take place in October. Delivery is expected in November. The goal is that Engine 31 will be put into service at the end of the first quarter.
- Currently getting ready to work on the parking lot and striping for Stations 31 and 35, as well as flooring. Chief Frost wanted to let the commissioners know that the vendor for the flooring honored their prices from last year.
- The EV stations are going in. One has been installed at Station 31 on the side of the building closest to the crew quarters. It has two charging stations off of one unit. Station 33's EV station is underway. 34 and 35 will be here shortly. A solution is still being worked on for Station 32.
- Still doing feasibility for the property. There is nothing to deliver yet, but everything seems to be going well.
- A lease was signed on the warehouse for logistics. Currently working on insurance paperwork with the goal of having the keys within a week.

### VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. No items.

### VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Documentary Preview and Introduction of Bill Lange

Chief Schmidt reported:

- Bill Lange is a documentary film maker and a resident of Panorama. Chief Schmidt introduced him and his intention to create a film about Lacey Fire and how LFD3 serves the Panorama community.
- Since then Bill has come in and filmed at the recruit academy, spend a day with a battalion chief, and spent time with Chief Brooks and Chief Schmidt, as well as with former members. He has completed a couple of episodes of his documentary and tonight is giving the commissioners a preview of his work.
- Mr. Lange greeted the fire commissioners via Zoom and thanked them for the opportunity.
- The first video to be released was played for those present to view.

## IX. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Patti reported:

- Call volumes have been steady, if not higher than normal. Nothing major has occurred within the district. Brush fires have gone up a bit, which is normal with the weather.
- The most notable call occurred last week for the SORT team at the Vance Creek Bridge in Mason County. Somehow, the bridge caught fire. The bridge itself is extremely unsafe. DNR and the local fire district worked to extinguish the fire but quickly realized that it was a very unsafe situation for them to be on the bridge. The SORT team was able to take four District 3 members, along with two other participating agency SORT members, to make a trip to the bridge.
- Crews were able to establish a line out onto the bridge in order to safely get onto the deck itself. The bridge itself is 375 feet above the creek floor. The fire on the bridge was dropping embers into the forest below and started a brush fire, so DNR was working on the forest fire with helicopters.
- At the end of the ropes, the crews were out 260 feet onto the bridge. They used a rope clipping system that would typically be used for tower crane rescues in order to get out onto the bridge deck.
- Chief Patti had several photos and videos to show of the bridge and the SORT team's work on this fire.
- Commissioner Hetzler inquired how long it takes, once a call is received, to gather the SORT team. Chief Patti responded that for out-of-county calls, it can take longer to organize and get to the situation. For in-county situations, the SORT team can be on scene in 20 to 25 minutes.
- Commissioner Kirkbride inquired if the SORT team has a dedicated vehicle. Chief Patti reported that there are three primary vehicles in the county: Rescue 91 at District 9 (primarily a high angle rope rescue truck), Rescue 01 in Olympia (primarily a confined space collapse vehicle) and SORT 31 at Lacey (with a wide complement of rope gear and back country access) and the trench trailer at Lacey (a big cargo trailer with all of the whalers and wall panels).
- Commissioner Hetzler inquired about the experience level of the SORT team members. Chief Patti reported that there is a variety of years of experience represented in the SORT team members, with some having more duration of experience than others.
- Commissioner Kirkbride asked if there is any knowledge of how the fire started. Chief Patti reported that there's questions as to whether it was manmade or if it could have been from a lightning strike. There has not been any further information on whether the source of the fire has been identified.

Chief Schmidt added to the administrative report:

- There was a social media post about the above situation. There have been many comments on the social media post thanking LFD3 for their work. It has been encouraging to have such great feedback from the community.
- In response to Commissioner Hetzler's inquiry about the age or experience level of the SORT team members: one of the goals of the team is to continue to work on succession planning. It takes about two years to get someone through all of the certifications that they need. Although the SORT team isn't used often, when they are called into action, it is for high-risk situations such as with this bridge. Intentional planning for staffing the SORT team is important.
- Commissioner Kirkbride asked about a report that Pierce County does not have a SORT team. Chief Patti reported that Pierce County does have a SORT team, but it is unclear what the status of that team is at present.
- Chief Schmidt resumed: the Capital Metro Girls Firefighter Camp took place this past weekend and was an incredible success. Camper census was up with 42 total campers who showed up. The entire camp was run very smoothly.

## **X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Kelling – thank you for the opportunity to participate virtually. Thanks for Mr. Lange for his work on the documentary. It is great to honor and thank the volunteers, especially the ISU force. There were 30 years of combined service between the 8 who were present this evening. The story about the bridge made the Fire Engineering news. Attended the last county elected official social. The commissioners are highly encouraged to attend at least one. They are held every quarter on the 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday. Lt. Governor Denny Heck came and spoke and shared some comments on the fiscal situation at the state level, stating that “it’s dire.” All the projections that they had initially for revenue were grossly over-projected, and the state reserves are relatively nonexistent. He talked about a project he is leading, called the Washington Project for Civic Health.

Commissioner Fournier was there and announced that the county has signed a purchase and sale agreement for seven acres in downtown Olympia for the Public Services and Regional Justice Center. They are going through their due diligence process. Commissioner Kelling will not be present at the August 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Commissioner Roberts – so much to be thankful for. So happy for Kevin and his family – what a well-deserved promotion and position. His involvement with the charity through the union was one of the first things that Commissioner Roberts encountered when joining Lacey Fire District 3, and both Nina and Kevin have given so much back to this community. With the ISU and everything they have done – it was a joy to see how proud they were showing off their new rig. It has been a long time coming and well deserved. There is a question of what will happen to the old vehicle. Thanks to Bill for his work on the documentary.

Commissioner Kirkbride – honoring the ISU and promoting one of our own is really critical and heartwarming. Grateful to Chief Brooks for initiating the ceremony for promotions and that it continues on today. All members of this district are outstanding individuals who give more than their all to the community.

Thanks to Mr. Lange for his work on the documentary. Thanks to the SORT team for their outstanding work. Also, proud of LFD3 for how well money is managed and for the level of service that is provided for the levy that is required. Other fire services require more money to do the same job that LFD3 is doing, and there is much to be proud of with regard to this agency and how well taxpayer money is managed. Unlike what is seen in the state of Washington, which has a spending problem not a revenue problem, LFD3 manages spending very well.

Commissioner Hetzler – a great meeting. Appreciation for all the presentations and for the documentary preview. There was an opportunity to attend former Chief Brooks' sign ceremony. It was a really good event. Today, along with Commissioner Roberts, had a tour of the ISU vehicle.

## **XI. CORRESPONDENCE**

Chief Schmidt reported that Thurston County Commissioner Fournier wrote a wonderful letter about the Capital Metro Girls Camp and had a lot of good things to say. The letter was forwarded to Firefighter Benson to be shared with all of the volunteers.

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

None.

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned as of 7:04 PM.

***Next Regular Meeting: August 21, 2025– 5:30 p.m.  
Available via remote meeting.***

Signed by:

*Liberty Hetzler*

8/22/2025

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Chair

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*John M...*

8/22/2025

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Vice Chair

Signed by:

*Melissa Gamble*

8/25/2025

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Commissioner

Signed by:

*Sybin Roberts*

8/23/2025

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Commissioner

Signed by:

*Michael Ceraski*

8/29/2025

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ATTEST: District Secretary

Commissioner