THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

September 17, 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 Roberts Commissioner Gamble Commissioner Kelling		Commissioner Kirkbride

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 September 3, 2026, Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.
B. Warrants (AP 9B 2026):
- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630): EFTs numbered 5860 through 5865; checks numbered 25044 through 25068; drafts numbered 1855 through 1868 for a total amount of $1,612,041.90.
- Donations Fun 101: EFT numbered 5867 for a total amount of $1,411.00.
- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: EFTs numbered 5868 through 5870; checks numbered 25069 through 25070 for a total amount of $213,954.25.
- Capital Projects Fund 301: EFT numbered 5866 for a total amount of $38,710.00.

C. Payroll 9A-2026 in the amount of $2,260,952.71.

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

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One
Commissioner Kirkbride is not present to report on the last meeting. Chief Schmidt mentioned the town halls being done by Thurston County Medic One and passed out a list of dates and attendance information for these town hall meetings.

B. Thurston 9-1-1 Communications (TCOMM)
No report; the next meeting is scheduled for September 30th, and the chief will be attending because it is joint operations and administrative.

C. City/District Liaison
Commissioner Hetzler reported that the city canceled the meeting this week, and the next meeting is scheduled for November 19th.

D. LFD3/EOFD ILA Committee
Commissioner Hetzler reported from the meeting earlier this month:

- Everything is going very smoothly.
- Financial information is available for how much LFD3 is billing vs. expenditures each month.
- There was a lengthy conversation about potential increased work in the future that would bring the actual billing up higher. For example, next year there will be labor contract negotiations.
- The financial piece may be renegotiated. The ILA allows LFD3 to make an adjustment of up to 10%. At the end of the year, if the actuals are quite a bit lower than what LFD3 has been billing, then negotiations can be made to make an adjustment up to 10% lower.
- Chief Schmidt reported that LFD3 will be more diligent about reporting time spent for travel, phone calls, etc.
- Commissioner Hetzler made the comment that much of the conversation focused on relatively minor issues, which in indicative that all of the big picture functioning is going smoothly. This was encouraging.
- Commissioner Kelling asked if LFD3 is billing at a standard rate. Chief Schmidt confirmed this. Commissioner Kelling went on to ask for clarification on why actuals are less than expected. Chief Schmidt reported that LFD3 is billing for $34,560 a month. The actual hours of cost are less than this amount.

E. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association
Commissioner Gamble reported from the recent meeting:

- There was a guest speaker, Jeff Johnston from ORCAA, who gave an overview of ORCAA. It covers six western Washington counties, including Thurston County, and jurisdiction covers 600,000 residents and more than 8,000 square miles. There are 18 staff members. It is governed by a nine-member board made up of county commissioners and city council representatives.
- There was a lot of discussion about air quality monitoring. There are stationary locations for monitoring, including one at Mountain View Elementary and another at an elementary school southeast of Yelm.
- They talked about fine particulate matter. PM 2.5 is the primary air quality concern. That generally is going to go up during winter months as residents use wood stoves for heat.
- They have a wood stove replacement program, which has removed more than 840 older wood stoves since 2011.
- They discussed the summer burn ban and how those dates are decided upon. This year the burn ban began July 8th and will end October 15th.
- Wildfire smoke has become the largest source of particulate pollution during smoke events.
- He also shared about how ORCAA works with local fire agencies for public awareness and health prevention.

F. Thurston Regional Planning Council
Commissioner Kelling reported from the September 10th meeting:
- This meeting was a council retreat. There were three items for regular business.
- Legislative priorities will be brought forward to the October 2nd meeting.

G. Community Outreach
Chris DeBell reported:
- We are providing EMS standby to all of the high school football games at South Sound Stadium. The first game was on September 4th. These take place on Thursday and Friday nights.
- On September 8th, the Lacey Historical Society held their 60th Annual celebration to celebrate 60 years of the City of Lacey, in addition to 250 years for the United States. Chief Cerovski brought the Seagrave and staged it at the entrance to the community center, where it made a nice focal point for the event.
- There have been two Senior Safe at Home events in the last couple of weeks. Those were conducted by ISU volunteers.
- Next Saturday, September 26th, is the Thurston County Emergency Prep Expo from 10:00 to 1:00 at the Lacey Community Center. LFD3 will have a prominent presence there with the inflatable firehouse.

H. Operations:
Chief Carson shared:
- On Wednesday, September 9th, at approximately 1:15 in the afternoon, one of the battalion units was traveling northbound on Marvin Road near

Evergreen Forest Elementary when a car traveling the opposite direction crossed over the center line, causing the battalion unit to roll over on its side, ending up partially off the road and causing very significant damage to the battalion unit.

- The battalion chief who was involved was able to self-extricate and call for assistance. There was a large contingency responding to this event.
- No parties involved were injured, but the battalion unit is a total loss. Currently working with Logistics to navigate how to move forward.

I. Logistics

Chief Patti reported:

- Chief Frost has been scouring the country looking for a new vehicle. The F150s used are known as police responder vehicles, which are obtained from state surplus or state contract. The vehicles are specifically wired for emergency response.
- Chief Frost has been checking with all of the state contract dealerships. There may be three units available on the east coast, so efforts are underway to determine if one of these can be obtained.
- The order window is currently open for a vehicle, but it takes about four to six months for these vehicles to be built, plus the outfitting process, which would mean it would take nearly a year to replace the vehicle. The backup Expedition is the reserve battalion rig and has gone back into service; however, this vehicle is older and pretty high in mileage.
- About two weeks ago, there was a catastrophic motor failure for Engine 32. This is one of the reserve rigs that has been gone into frontline service. Once the crew realized the problem, they shut it down and the mechanics had it towed back to the shop.
- Logistics is working with finance to determine if repairs are feasible. Thankfully, the model of the motor itself is fairly easy to obtain. This process may take until late October or early November. Work is underway with the VRF to make this happen. The shop will do this locally rather than sending the vehicle up north.
- Truck 312 is still up north having its motor replaced. This is going well so far.
- The uniform shop will be closing at the end of the month. If any apparel items are needed, they will need to be ordered before then.
- Commissioner Kelling asked what rig is covering Station 32. Chief Patti responded that there is a reserve rig covering Station 32. The previous Engine 32 is in "deep reserve" but is still available to go into service if needed.
- Commissioner Hetzler asked about the age of the BC rigs. Chief Patti responded that Battalion 34 was the newest rig, a 2024. Battalion 31 is either a 2021 or 2022. The replacement rig will be a 2026.

J. Standards and Resilience

Chief Cerovski reported:

- Community Risk Reduction: working on plans for the 2027 Insurance Symposium. This is scheduled for May 12, 2027, at the Lacey Community Center. Working on finalizing the survey that will go out to the participants providing information and inclusion in the selection of topics. The theme for 2027 will be proactive risk reduction efforts, reactive risk reduction responses, and recovery risk reduction outcomes. The main idea is looking at before, during, and after the incident and looking at the things that the insurance industry, business owners, and stakeholders in the community would like to grow in understanding.
- There is an opportunity to work with the Nisqually Tribe. They have invited LFD3 to be involved in the preconstruction project for the Redwind Casino. There have been discussions about secondary access and egress. They were very receptive to LFD3's requests for consideration and appear willing to address the things that will support LFD3's support for an emergency at that location.
- The commissioners brought forward a question about a project on Carpenter Road. The concerns shared by Commissioner Roberts were not significant; however, there were other questions identified. This project is managed by the City of Lacey, and LFD3 was able to communicate with their team. There were discussions about access and egress at the east emergency entrance/exit location. It is protected by a bollard system with temporarily removable bollards. At our request the City asked for a gate managed by an Opticom system, and they are reaching out to the project lead to see if this can be amended. This project is located at the curve of Carpenter Road, and pausing to take bollards out is potentially dangerous.
- LFD3 is involved in the FIIRE program provided by Labor and Industries which provides a 10% discount on rates for year over year. This has been the case since 2022, and it has already been renewed for 2027. This is an opportunity for the Safety and Compliance Office to be involved in doing some proactive things to help reduce risk and hopefully reduce claims.
- Regarding the cladding project at Station 34: the target was to see material delivered to replace the broken cladding by the middle of September. There is now a delay, and the hope is that it will be delivered by the beginning of October.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Bond Updates

Chief Schmidt reported:

- Logistics put up two banners at the Britton Parkway property. As the messaging is going out to the community, they can now visualize the location.
- Another video was filmed this week. This makes a total of 12 videos that are going out. These videos continue to receive good feedback from the community.
- The mailer is at the printer. It will be sent on October 5th, which is right about the same time that ballots are sent out.

- Chief Schmidt presented to the City of Lacey on Tuesday at a City Council meeting. There was a very large audience for this event, and the presentation seemed to be very well received.
- Chief Schmidt will be going out to Jubilee next week for a State of the District presentation along with time for a Q&A.
- On October 7th, Chief Schmidt will have another speaking engagement with the City of Lacey Chamber of Commerce.

B. Merger Updates

Chief Schmidt reported:

- As Commissioner Hetzler shared from the ILA meeting, LFD3 continues to have great interactions both with the board from East Olympia and the members. At that meeting, it was reaffirmed that the membership at District 6 is very grateful and appreciative of the leadership that Chief Patti has been giving them, as well as all of the administrative support that they are receiving.
- The Board of East Olympia had a special meeting yesterday. During that meeting, they spoke about mergers and about how things are going. The Board decided to send a letter of intent to be sent to the Board of Fire Commissioners. The letter is from their board chair, Commissioner Faust, and the letter was unanimous. They wish to ask that LFD3 continues to move forward. They did not petition but rather are sending a letter of intent which allows for time to respond. Copies of the letter were distributed to the LFD3 fire commissioners.
- Their labor members shared that there will be conversations between the LFD3 labor reps and the District 6 labor reps. They are meeting next week, and their labor reps have a union meeting the following day.
- Commissioner Kelling asked about when East Olympia's labor management agreement is up. Chief Schmidt shared that it is the same as LFD3. Contract negotiations would happen next year.

Commissioner Hetzler addressed the merger opportunity with South Bay:

- Everyone has had an opportunity to watch South Bay's last board meeting.
- As a reminder, LFD3 was invited by Chief VanCamp in the spring to attend one of their board meetings to discuss a potential merger. The meeting went well, but it felt somewhat as if their commissioners were a little caught off guard. In the time since then, much time has been spent looking at finances, logistics, etc. to determine if a merger is feasible.
- At the last larger group meeting about a month ago, it still felt like perhaps the commissioners were a little bit out of the loop on a couple of issues. At the time, it was decided that the individual agencies would have their own meetings to take a deep dive into whether this merger is a good fit.

- After the last large group meeting, Commissioner Hetzler has a letter to share with the commissioners officially proposing that LFD3 step away from the merger conversations at this point. This is largely due to the tone of the last meeting.
- Commissioner Kelling asked if it is clear that South Bay has all of the information that they would need to have if they want to pursue merger discussions. Commissioner Hetzler responded that she does not think this is the case. They have been presented with everything they could possibly present, and even with repeated conversations, they continue to ask questions that make it appear that LFD3 is not being heard.
- Commissioner Hetzler shared her perspective that LFD3 is being treated as if they are there trying to grab South Bay, whereas in reality LFD3 was invited by South Bay and that it does not feel like a good fit to move forward with.
- Commissioner Gamble shared feeling similarly confused by the tone of the meeting.
- Commissioner Roberts agreed that the timing for a merger is not right.

MOTION: To execute the letter as written.
Motion: Commissioner Kelling
Second: Commissioner Gamble
Carried: Unanimous

- Commissioner Roberts asked about ensuring that the letter gets to them. Chief Schmidt shared that staff will reach out. Chiefs from both agencies will be cc'd as well as the Chair. A phone call will also be made to ensure that the letter is received and that their board has an opportunity to see it.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Policy Review — Staff Presentation & Board Action

1. P-506.1 – Professional Standards

Chief Cerovski reviewed the policy:

- Definitions of de minimis are provided.
- When items are transported by LFD3 for community members, this is clearly communicated and there is an official handoff to ensure that items go to the right place.
- Members may not solicit gifts in any way.
- Food donations are excluded from reportable value to the fire chief or designee.
- A member may accept gifts of de minimis value; those gifts must be reported to the fire chief or designee.
- Members may not give preferential treatment to family members or friends.

- Members must avoid placing themselves in a situation that creates a conflict of interest between their personal interests and those of the District.
- Members must communicate with staff if the work they do outside of the District is an interference to the responsibilities of the District.

2. F-321 – District Fee Structure
    - The policy clarifies the definition of a nuisance alarm. LFD3 will respond following the alarm three times, but if the nuisance alarm is not repaired, then a flat fee of $50 will be charged for the second and third response. Nuisance alarm fees may be waived if the condition is corrected.
    - The policy covers inspection fees and the reinspection process.
    - Extraordinary emergency response and cost recovery is addressed. Documentation of extraordinary costs is required.
    - Waiver of fees is covered in a variety of circumstances that are clearly delineated in the policy.
    - Administrative review and appeal of an assessed fee is covered in the policy.
    - Collection of unpaid charges may be referred in a manner consistent with Washington law.
    - An annual review is written into the policy as well.
    - Commissioner Roberts inquired about nuisance alarms as it relates to kids pulling alarms in schools. Chief Cerovski responded that there have been no major instances of this occurring, and if it were to occur, this would not be the fault or responsibility of the business owner, so it does not qualify.
    - Commissioner Kelling inquired about the fee structure and whether an apparatus that spends 30 minutes at a site addressing issues would be able to bill for a full hour. Chief Cerovski responded that if at the point of invoicing by the hour, it would indicate that the business is already in a noncompliance situation, and in that case, it would be necessary to bill by the hour.

MOTION: To approve Policy P-5016, Professional Standards, and Policy F-321, District Fee Structure.
Motion: Commissioner Kelling
Second: Commissioner Roberts
Carried: Unanimous

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. District Monthly Financial Report
Finance Manager Patty Quimby presented:
- General Fund 001: net excess of $6.6 million.
- Donation Fund 101: net excess of $17,000.

- Reserve Fund 102: net excess of $1.1 million.
- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: after some large expenses, 76% of the total allocated amount has been dispersed as of August 2026. Net excess of $303,700.
- General Fund Summary: net excess of $8.1 million.
- Bond Fund 201: net excess of $79,000.
- Bond 2017 Fund 202: net excess of $538,216.
- 2025 Bond Fund 203: net excess of $817,000.
- Capital Projects Fund 301: net excess of $936,000.
- 2025 Capital Projects Fund 309: net excess of $5.8 million.
- A number of charts and graphs were shown further visualizing the financial report.

B. Chief Schmidt reported:

- The Member Recognition event is on Sunday at 4:00 at the Fairgrounds.
- There is a workshop next week on the 24th. The agenda includes healthcare (both the current plan and alternative opportunities), a presentation from Chief Cerovski about the capital facilities plan, an intro to accreditation, and the board chair process. Commissioner Hetzler added that there will be an executive session, as well.
- The American Legion gave an award to Firefighter Gwen Morton, who was out of town when the award ceremony happened. They will be present at the next meeting to present this award.
- The ESGR (Employee Support for the Guard and Reserves) along with Firefighter and USGC reservist Kiana Sullenberger and presented the district with an award.
- The 911 ceremony was successful. There was a great turnout from the community, partner agencies, and the honor guard.
- Day 2 of 3 of the new hire process has been completed. There are eight panel members from within the ranks who are set up for two groups to go through. Over 80 people are coming moving forward in this process. Tomorrow will be the final day and chief interviews are next week. There are five known positions to fill.
- The AV preliminary numbers came back from the county. Chief Kirkwood forwarded them to the commissioners. Unfortunately, there is little to no increase – a 0.16% increase. Originally a 4% increase was projected. This means that the projected budget will have to be watched very closely.
- The Community Advisory Committee has committed to meeting again on November 30th.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kelling – appreciated the 911 Ceremony. Thank you for putting it on. Question directed to the chief: how much does an apparatus engine cost? Chief Patti responded that the engine will be close to $100,000. Chief Schmidt

mentioned that the engine with the motor failure is from 2012. Commissioner Kelling continued his comments with an apology for being unable to attend Chief Schmidt's presentation to the Lacey City Council and mentioned that it is available on video.

Commissioner Roberts – the 911 Ceremony was amazing and thoughtful and very much appreciated. Thanks to Chief Cerovski for checking into the building on Carpenter Road. Will not be able to attend the next meeting.

Commissioner Gamble – with the battalion chief vehicle incident, was fault found, and will insurance for the other driver be billed? Chief Carson responded that the other vehicle was at fault. Chief Cerovski mentioned that the other vehicle, which was at fault, was uninsured and unregistered. This creates an issue with the District's insurance provider. There are three different handlers of the case: one for injury, one for property, and one for contents. The driver of the apparatus was not at fault in any way. The process of working through this situation with the insurance provider is underway.

Commissioner Hetzler – the 911 Ceremony was excellent, and the personal stories shared were very moving.

X. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Correspondence
Chief Schmidt reported:

- During the 911 Ceremony, there was an interaction with Jim and Fred from Alonda Village. They attended the ceremony and it was meaningful for them to come and give support. They sent a card to the District.

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

Jonathan Clemens spoke as a volunteer chief officer at South Bay to apologize for the reception and the tone of the recent meeting. In retrospect, the members have not been given a chance to publicly process their fears and objections, and the proposed employment actions had a disproportionate effect on the tenor of the whole. It is hoped that there will be opportunities to move forward with continued discussion. It would be ideal to see a partnership worked out that ensures that all concerns can be addressed.

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 6:46 and was scheduled to take 15 minutes.

The executive session ended at 7:00. No action was taken in the executive session but action will be taken now.

MOTION: To authorize Chief Schmidt to develop a real estate purchase and sale agreement with the Walden Road Southeast property owner and to execute said agreement.
Motion: Commissioner Gamble
Second: Commissioner Kelling

Carried: Unanimous

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 7:01 PM.

Workshop Meeting: September 24, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Next Regular Meeting: October 1, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.

Liberty Hetzler (10/06/2026 08:27:10 PDT)

Chair

Vice Chair

Melissa Gamble

Melissa Gamble (10/07/2026 16:20:38 PDT)

Commissioner

Commissioner

Richard Kelling (10/13/2026 10:14:28 PDT)

Commissioner

ATTEST: District Secretary

09 17 2026 BoFC Minutes Final

Final Audit Report 2026-10-13

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2026-10-07 - 4:20:36 PM PDT

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