

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

November 20th, 2025

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 Kirkbride Commissioner Roberts Commissioner Hetzler Commissioner Gamble Commissioner Kelling		

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.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride

Second: Commissioner Gamble

Carried: Unanimous

III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Draft minutes of the October 30, 2025, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.
- B. Draft minutes of the November 6, 2025, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners.
- C. Warrants (AP 11B 2025):
 - General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5678 through 5683; checks numbered 24638 through 24661; drafts numbered 1660 through 1672 for a total amount of \$1,479,481,35.

- Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund 103: EFTs numbered 5684 through 5685; check number 24662 for a total amount of \$12,740,74.
- Capital Projects Fund 301: EFT number 5686 for a total amount of \$16,000.00.

D. Payroll 11A-2025 in the amount of \$2,053,078.72.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Roberts

Second: Commissioner Kelling

Carried: Unanimous

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

There will be no meeting in November. The next meeting is December 18th.

- However, since the last Fire Commissioner meeting, a committee for the community needs assessment project, which is the follow up to the comprehensive plan, has been planned.
- On January 1, the needs assessment will begin. It is scheduled to take all year.
- EMS Council has retained Steve Brooks as a facilitator for the process. The process is broken into four sections, each on a quarterly basis, and in the first quarter, he will be communicating with all of the EMS partners in Thurston County and finding out how things are going, ideas for changes, etc. The goal in this phase is to gather data and input.
- In the second quarter, that same conversation is going to happen with partners such as hospitals, ambulance companies, the police departments, etc. to get feedback on EMS within Thurston County and how that's working and where they are going. Part of the reasoning for this is that as part of the comprehensive plan, there were meetings with hospitals and ambulance companies, and it was stunning to find out what they are doing and where they are going.
- In the third quarter, there will be communications with the community to get input from citizens around the county about their expectations, issues, problems, etc.
- In the fourth quarter, all the information will be used to create the Community Needs Assessment Program. This will set the stage for the Strategic Plan to start in January of 2027.

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

No report; the next meeting will take place on December 3rd.

- Of note, the phone conversion has been delayed. A partner in the consortium is still having some issues. As of today, there is no date for the cutover yet.

C. City/District Liaison

No report; the next meeting is December 9th.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

Commissioner Kelling reported from the November 18 meeting:

- The program was elections. Current nomination for president: Commissioner Bivens from South Bay, who is the incumbent. For vice president: Commissioner Miller from Bald Hills (also the incumbent). The secretary treasurer position is being vacated and is currently open. Trustees: Commissioner Ricks from West Thurston, Commissioner Albert from McLane Black Lake, and Commissioner McMaster from Bald Hills.
- There are three commissioners that are retiring: Commissioner Moon, who is one of the three representatives on the EMS Council; Commissioners O'Callahan and Vanderhoof, both from South Thurston.
- The committee appointments as they stand: Commissioner Hutchins will remain on TCOMM. The EMS Council committee members, Commissioner Ricks and Commissioner Miller, are looking for a third to replace to Commissioner Moon.
- The legislative day is scheduled for January 29th.
- The next meeting will be a potluck at the TEC on December 16th.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council

Chief Cerovski reported from the meeting on November 7th:

- They have selected an executive director: Elissa Gertler, who has more than 25 years of experience with housing, transportation, and community development efforts in regional and local governments in the Oregon area. She begins her tenure with TRPC on December 5th.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Schmidt shared:

- There were two Senior Safe at Home assessments on November 14th.
- This morning, there was a crew involved in the North Thurston High School girls' volleyball team state sendoff.
- There have been two to four smoke detector checks for community members.
- There were three car seat fittings.
- Bill Lange released his fourth episode, and there is a lot of interaction with it on social media.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

No report for this evening.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. 2026 LFD3 Budget Presentation and Public Hearing

Board Action

Director Kirkwood presented the 2026 proposed budget:

- This budget represents approximately \$1.35 million in growth of property tax revenue from 2025 to 2026, which allows LFD3 to honor commitments to personnel with a 3.5% cost of living adjustment, as well as being able to cover a 15% increase in medical premium costs.
- There will be a reserved balance at the end of 2026 of \$8.6 million, which represents about 20.9% of the total general fund expenditure appropriation.
- Certified assessed value was received for 2025 for the 2026 tax levy period. The certified assessed value is \$22.8 billion, which is up about 4.09% from 2025.
- The projected property tax levy for 2026 will be \$34.2 million (which is up \$1.34 million from 2025).
- Projected revenue is about 99% of the total levy at \$33.9 million next year.
- Major budget expenditures included in this budget:
 - 3.5% cost of living adjustment for all staff.
 - 15% increase in medical insurance premiums.
 - Owners Representative Contract for major capital projects.
 - \$115,000 warehouse lease.
 - Logistical equipment purchases: \$96,000.
 - Information technology hardware replacement: \$58,000.
 - Training programs: \$54,000.
 - Promotional testing: \$26,000.
- Director Kirkwood continued to present the budget with a variety of graphs and charts.
- The public hearing began and the floor was opened for questions and comments.
 - A question came regarding the 2025 bonds, which are directed from a bank. Are those renegotiable if interest rates drop? Can those rates be refinanced if economic changes become more favorable?
 - Directed Kirkwood responded in the affirmative.
- There were no additional questions and the public hearing was then closed.

Commissioner Kelling inquired about Resolution 902, stating that bond fund 202 does not match what was just presented compared to page 30 of the proposed budget.

Director Kirkwood mentioned that the tax revenue might not be accurate on the ClearGov documents. Changes were made today and this one may not have been updated. The number on the resolution of \$1.622 million is the correct number. The property tax amount that is on Fund 202 is actually \$1.37 million, so it will need to be updated in the ClearGov documents.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution 902-11-25 LFD3 Budget Adoption Board Discussion and Action

MOTION: To adopt resolution 902-11-25, a resolution of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire Protection District No. 3, Thurston County, Washington, adopting the annual budget for Lacey Fire District for fiscal year 2026.

Motion: Commissioner Kelling
Second: Commissioner Roberts
Carried: Unanimous

B. Resolution 901-11-25 Authorizing Levy Increase Board Discussion and Action

MOTION: To adopt Resolution 901-11-25 , a resolution of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire Protection District No. 3, Thurston County, Washington, authorizing an increase in the district's tax levy from the previous year.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Gamble
Carried: Unanimous

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. District Monthly Financial Report

Director Kirkwood presented:

- General fund 001: net excess of \$16,525,417.80.
- Donation fund 101: net excess of \$16,469.
- Reserve fund 102: net excess of \$1,029,706.
- Equipment repair and replacement fund 103: net excess of \$601,266.
- General fund summary: net excess of \$18,172,860.
- Bond 2017 fund 202: net excess of \$1,047,533.
- Capital projects fund 301: net excess of \$475,460.
- Capital projects CFEP funds 307: net excess \$137,974.
- 2025 Capital projects fund 309: net excess of \$14,019,595.
- Commissioner Roberts inquired about the money coming in from the Nisqually Tribe and the observation that this fund is the only one below 90% at this time. Director Kirkwood responded that they are billed monthly, and LFD3 does reach out to them on a regular basis to instigate payment.

Chief Schmidt continued with the rest of the administrative report:

- Commissioner Kelling had brought forward the idea of supporting the 988 stickers that went on all of the license plates on all of the apparatus. There was an outreach from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, asking for advertisement of LFD3's support of that group. LFD3 is willing to participate and would like to know if Commissioner Kelling would be interested in participating as well. Commissioner Kelling responded that it is a great opportunity and that

there are a number of members who are veterans who make a much bigger impact in the community, and it would be worthwhile to highlight them. Chief Schmidt suggested that it could be both.

- The Santa Mobile was decorated today out of Station 34. The Grinch theme is underway.
- A basketball charity game will be taking place on the 22nd at 5:30 at Tumwater High School. The theme is cops versus firefighters.
- About a month ago, the commissioners were informed about a pause in the SCO process because candidates had not been notified of their scores. The offer that had been made was paused. Work has been done with the union on this. All the scores were distributed and none were contested. The offer was re-extended and the goal is for that individual to be on board in January.
- Update on the audit process: there was an entry interview with the auditor (although they have been in the station working for about a month now). There is probably another week or so of work to be done. Then there will be an exit process.
- There have been conversations with Director Gorman recently about his team about the wins and the things that teams have done behind the scenes. He created a bullet list of some of the things that he has been working on, including:
 - They have provided training on the use of 911 to all nine of the licensed care facilities in the area.
 - They have spent two days this year training lateral recruits on emotional intelligence, defusing, death and trauma resilience.
 - In October, they spoke at the Washington Fire Administrators Conference on suicide awareness.
 - They traveled to Pasco to be part of a Mobile Integrated Health Symposium.
 - They provided training for mitigating the overutilization of 911 to several departments in the state. One agency they helped with was Puget Sound Fire (a very large organization).
 - They helped conduct four line of duty death memorial services.
 - They did two different Welcome to LFD3 gatherings for new recruits and their spouses.
 - They have one intern who is getting field hours. They might have three mental health interns here all at once.
 - They recently expanded their chaplain ranks and brought on a new chaplain.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kelling – thanks to Chief Cerovski for pulling the WSRB ratings reports and sending those out. Thanks to the entire finance team and Director Kirkwood for their hard work in combination with transitioning over to the new software platform. It was not mentioned earlier about the December 16th Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association Meeting – there will be a VRF tour as part of the program. Adam Cummings, the senior mechanic, is on board.

In looking towards the new year, it is suggested to consider inviting the new TRPC director at some point. At some point, perhaps the Lacey Economic Development Director can also be invited. Happy Thanksgiving to everybody.

Commissioner Roberts – thank you for all the diligence on the budget. At the last meeting it was mentioned that there was a search for another charity to be involved in for Thanksgiving. Chief Schmidt responded that they are trying to look forward to the Christmas outreach at this point.

Commissioner Gamble – thanks to Director Kirkwood and the finance team for all of their work.

Commissioner Kirkbride – it is impressive to be able to put a complicated budget together, maintain the budget and monitor it, and then make changes at the 11th hour. Thanks to the team for all of their hard work. It is impressive to see the functioning of the entire team and how they cooperate and work together and how the whole organization feels like a well-run machine. The leadership of Chief Schmidt is impressive.

Commissioner Hetzler – the budget presentation was excellent. Is the format appropriate or able to be used for the monthly budget presentation? Director Kirkwood replied that this is the goal moving forward. A question: because dates for some meetings next year were changed to different days than normal, was that published already on the website? Chief Cerovski responded that it has not yet been published, but that would be the practice in December to get ready for the new year. Commissioner Hetzler also noted that at the December 18th meeting, there will be only three commissioners present, so they all need to attend.

X. CORRESPONDENCE

Chief Schmidt reported on outreaches from community citizens:

- On October 26th, crews were dispatched to a commercial structure fire, which was a multi-family dwelling. This was a chimney fire, and crews were able to get in and stop the fire. During the process, they were able to save three lives (two cats and a dog). A card was sent by the homeowners to thank the crews for their hard work.

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. In accordance with RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) to review the performance of a public employee.

Ten minutes were allotted for the executive session.

The executive session ended at 7:05.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 7:05 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: December 4th, 2025 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.



Liberty Hetzler (12/05/2025 10:36:00 PST)

Chair



Melissa Gamble (12/07/2025 16:16:44 PST)

Commissioner



Richard Kelling (12/05/2025 10:23:52 PST)

Commissioner



Vice Chair



Sylvia Roberts (12/05/2025 18:41:25 PST)

Commissioner



ATTEST: District Secretary

November 20, 2025 BoFC Meeting Minutes Final

Final Audit Report

2025-12-10

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