

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

June 16, 2022

Commissioner Kirkbride
Commissioner Gamble
Commissioner Hetzler
Commissioner Kelling
Commissioner Roberts

The meeting was held in person with limited attendance and is open to the public via the Zoom meeting platform. The meeting is being recorded.

Commissioner Gamble was excused.
Commissioner Roberts is attending via Zoom.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kirkbride 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: To approve the agenda as amended.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler
Second: Commissioner Kelling
Carried: Unanimous

III. PROMOTIONAL CEREMONIES

A. Recruit Academy Oath of Office Ceremony

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| a. Joshua Baker | g. Sarah Lanter |
| b. Rory Aldana | h. Taylor Stauffer |
| c. Mitch Bourque | i. Kaleb Strawn |
| d. Garrett Broumley | j. Austen Stutsman |
| e. Daulton Crabtree | k. Elizabeth Sykes |
| f. Tyler Hill | l. Corey Tatman |

IV. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

V. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft minutes of the June 2, 2022, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

B. Warrants:

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs number 5074 through 5077; checks numbered 23113 through 23144; and bank draft number 960 for a total amount of \$683,397.38.
- Equipment, Repair and Replacement Fund 103 check number 23106 in the amount of \$1,694.15.
- 2017B Capital Improvements Projects Fund 307 EFT number 5023 and check number 23127 in the amount of \$22,787.53.

C. Payroll 6A in the amount of \$1,495,866.99.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as amended.

Commissioners Kirkbride and Kelling submitted minor edits to the minutes.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler.

Second: Commissioner Kelling.

Carried: Unanimous

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

Commissioner Kirkbride reported from the June 15 meeting:

- Adopted the format of how money is distributed for OTEP funding to the fire service agencies. It was a budget item that was already approved, but there is a new way of distributing it, and that process was then adopted. It provides a base amount of money of \$2500 to every agency with a per qualified responder amount based on the population.
- There was an upgrade as to what response times are. Every year, there is a report as to how all the agencies are doing in response to all the three different categories – urban, suburban, and rural. There is also a fourth category of wilderness. This is measured based on each of the response times. The response times are 10 minutes for urban, 15 minutes for suburban, and 30 minutes for rural. The measurement is for whether this is made in 90% of the

time, and this was achieved. There has however been some erosion in times that comes with additional call volumes, additional populations, and additional traffic. This is for ALS only.

- Lacey Fire District has their own criteria for BLS calls and fire calls.
- The decision was made to continue to have hybrid meetings. The majority of the counsel members are zooming in.
- Every year, funds are given out. About \$10,000 is budgeted for the agencies to have special projects. Fire District 9 wanted some tactical vests and bullet proof vests. It went through a committee process that the operations committee handles, and then it is brought forward. If they want to spend more than what is budgeted, which happens on occasion, then that is an action by counsel to spend more. There were no applicants this year for that.
- The bulk of the meeting was spent with the Olympia Fire Department making a presentation on their proposal to city council to run public ambulances versus private. They do not have any aid cars. They want to add two aid cars, one at Station 1 and one at Station 2. They are proposing that their aid units get toned out as first transport unit and then they will go to AMR and then Olympic and then to mutual aid ambulances if they need those. They will be charging for transport. They have funding from two different sources; GMET, which is essentially federal dollars tied to Medicaid and Medicare. They will also be billing insurance companies as the private ambulances do as well. Privates are still important and still a backup to them, and the aid vehicles will be going on regular routine calls. There will be times, probably many, when they are not available for transport for other responses. It was stressed that the private ambulances still have a role.
- The citizen representative from the EMS council is Paul Perz. He is the council's representative to the West Region EMS Council.
- The advisory board has some really good, engaged citizens, and perhaps one of them would like to come forward to be a citizen representative for the EMS council.

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

No report – the next meeting is July 6th.

C. City/District Liaison

- Chief Brooks shared that regarding the stormwater situation, staff is still working to find a mutually acceptable date. None has been put forward yet. Chief Brooks will follow up on this.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

No report.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

Commissioner Roberts reported from the last meeting:

- There are some federal monies that have become available. The difficulty with them is that they need to be encumbered by September 1st, 2022. They can be used to cover inflationary things for projects that have begun. In some cases, there needs to be a city match or a county match. This money can be used for the match. They can be used for transit, design, or pretty much anything that could be that encumbered amount and could move forward quickly. A few things being looked at is some work on the Littlerock Road for transit. They are looking at doing some propane fuel dial-a-vans. They are looking at planning the I5 interchange on 93rd, some mobility study around it. And then in the design phase, they are looking at the Yelm Spurgeon Creek area and also Rochester Main Street.
- TRPC looked at how to submit a list for the grant. It was voted yes, to go ahead, and to look at those projects and get them submitted.
- There was a mid-year update from the executive director that covered the Martin Way corridor study, southwest Thurston County trail feasibility, rural mobility strategies, hazard mitigation plan update, local disaster recovery, school walk route mapping, which has become a big deal particularly out in Tumwater. There was also a little bit on boundary review. The minutes include links which will be helpful. There was an update on Mounts Road. There is apparently a long slideshow available, and they would be able to come share at a commissioners' meeting if desired.
- There is some new money out again for projects. It used to be at 5 million, and it has gone to 20 million, but it is very complicated because it has to involve multiple agencies. They looked at the possibility of hiring somebody to coordinate that, but they are really concerned at this point of basically working for one jurisdiction and not working for another as far as the application of this money. It was decided that it needed to be studied a little bit further.
- There are a number of surveys available online. The minutes will take you via hyperlinks to some of those.
- The next meeting is July 1st.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- Continuing to have strong support for programs and lots of requests coming in.
- The next big event will be the July 3rd fireworks at Rainier Vista.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- In a holding pattern right now. There has been a delay at the city for review of comments on the applications for VRF expansion. Waiting on that

currently. Ready to start the bidding process as soon as all those have cleared permitting.

- Starting the budgeting process for next year. There will be a meeting later this month. Currently not doing anything with Station 33 or other smaller projects.
- Engine 35 has gone out for repairs. At last check, they were still waiting on some of the parts and they are doing what work they can while waiting for those parts to arrive.
- Commissioner Kirkbride shared that with bids coming in from subcontractors, numbers have not escalated, and some of the work is expected to be 18 months out from now. Contractors are reasonably comfortable that pricing may have peaked out.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. COVID Emergency Declaration status: Staff Report.

- If a member declares that they are sick themselves or have been in an exposure situation and have to quarantine, there is a series of tracking that has to be done at the shift level, then that translates up to finance, and then Dale does the process of having the finance team do the back billing. This has paid dividends of now over \$435,000 in recovered expense, which would obviously be a huge budgetary impact. Thanks to Dale and the team for this work. July 1st has been stated as the last day of the current pandemic.
- Following the latest CDC criteria regarding having to track the status of each individual member because there is a different course based on your level of exposure and if a person is boosted versus just vaccinated. It changes the requirements for each individual. There is a lot of nuance on how to manage each individual.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Brooks reported:

- Has been able to sit down with the city manager last week regarding the storm water easements for the new Station 34. To summarize, the city manager was not aware of but now understands the issue. He says that the city is just now beginning their own evaluation process and their own internal review for an expansion enhancement next door at the Regional Athletic Complex. They are going through an improvement process with an area that is currently just a gravel parking lot, and they will be doing their own frontage improvements to the road. They are waiting for presubmissions on what the plans are for the potential Ostrom's property. Once that goes through, their understanding is

that there is a pending purchase and sale agreement on that, but it is not cleared yet. The city manager agreed to go back and brief the public works director on the issue. As they start their own analysis and assessment of the frontage improvements that the city will have to do based on their expansion, they will include potential mitigation or impacts of or opportunities to reroute – whatever it looks like. They can roll that all into the assessment of what future improvements will look like and if there are other ways to mitigate, redirect, or potentially take some level of ownership. They will keep Chief Brooks apprised.

- Chief Brooks and the chief officers just returned from the staff retreat. There were new additions this year who brought a new level of depth and insight. The deputy chiefs will be working on some summary documents to share about the retreat. Everyone who attended found it very valuable, and it may be helpful to have a similar model to work with the administrative staff. It would be a great tool going forward.
- Regarding the requested update on the strategic planning process. Spoke with support services director Gorman. They have been working over the past month or so with Chief Cerovski's help on some surveying tools out to all the community partners, including law enforcement, TCOMM, and Medic One. They are just wrapping up this week getting all of that data back and figuring out how they want to organize it. Director Gorman said he felt confident that he could have it ready by late July or early August. There should be a draft plan by early September.
- There was a request for an update on the annual report, which typically goes out at the end of the first quarter or the beginning of the second quarter. There were challenges with getting good data based on some of the challenges with the record management system. Chief Cerovski has now been able to get some good data out, and by the next meeting, should be able to show the data set that will roll into the annual report and shortly thereafter have a draft annual report, hopefully by the second July meeting.
- Commissioner Kirkbride commented that Chief Buchanan mentioned that Support Services is highly thought of and they want to put a similar organization together. Chief Johns mentioned the success in reducing calls to senior facilities.
- Chief Brooks provided an update about staffing goals. Two new lateral hire paramedics have been brought on since the last meeting. A pinning ceremony for them will be held at the second July meeting.
- Chief Brooks shared a document showing the goals for staffing up to the required and desired levels to be able to add the second aid unit. To bring up the second aid unit at Station 34, the goal is to be at 15 firefighters per shift. There are 14 positions every day for firefighters. That is exclusive of the officers, battalion chiefs, and paramedics. There are 15 now assigned based on the new hires to three of the four shifts. There are a few folks still out on leave of absence. The goal is to get to seven paramedics on each shift. On paper, this level is attained on two of the shifts, but still short two. The lateral paramedics would fill that out. There will be two more new hire paramedics starting in July and can perform a dual role as paramedic or firefighter. On paper, this would look like full staffing.

- Actively working on Medic One negotiations, and if it is approved, the ALS contract will afford some additional capacity for certified paramedics. They are renewing the staffing list for paramedics again later this month. There is a possibility depending on if there are new candidates – there are four slots reserved at the Bates Training Academy starting in September. The two new hires coming on in July will fill two of those. The other two slots are reserved in case two more can be found. It feels unlikely right now, but it is possible. This would help backfill for those who are on leave or who may be retiring before the end of the year.
- Working into the budget process, the goal is to start building capacity going forward because in looking at the growth trends, it appears that the need is to plan for a third aid vehicle at Station 31. The volumes at Station 31 continue to rise. Having to run the ladder truck more on aid calls than would be preferred. Will start the process in the fall of how many positions would potentially need to be hired for, with retirements anticipated before the end of the year. Another block of hires is anticipated at the end of this year to backfill positions. By that time, the Medic One contract will be settled. Hoping to recruit for additional laterals or another round of updated hiring through the Medic One process in October.
- Commissioner Kirkbride questioned the paramedic staffing, and Chief Brooks reported that whenever someone is off on vacation, a significant amount of overtime is required to cover for this. The paramedics are working a lot of overtime, and it is a primary goal to increase the number of paramedics in the contract because there simply are not enough. There are two to three paramedics on overtime nearly every day. If it is related to disabilities, those are funded fully 100%. The backfill is provided by Medic One. But if it is not related to a duty disability, that comes out of the budget.
- Commissioner Kirkbride also asked what the retirement numbers look like. Chief Brooks reported that there are over 20 members who are eligible to retire. There are about six paramedics over the next two years who may retire and several who do plan to. This is why the backfill process and planning ahead for this is so important. Three to four retirements within the next year are expected.
- Commissioner Kelling asked about the notification for retirement. Chief Brooks responded that it is not something that is stipulated in the contract. It would be difficult to legally compel notification, but there are ways to incentivize notification, and this has been discussed, adopting ways to incentivize advanced notification. Typically, there is two to three months of notice.
- Chief Brooks also reported that there are some temporary positions that have rotated into training. There will be an interview process for the assistant chief of training role. Whoever is promoted into that position, Chief Cox will be reverting back to shift, so that is a net zero change. Lieutenant Hunter will be remaining in training through the end of this year and then his compelled assignment is up at training. He may or may not want to stay longer. Lieutenant Randall was only in during the recruit academy, and so he will move back to shift which will bring that balance back on the numbers on the A shift side. Someone will likely be going off of another shift and going into

training to retain the new chief officer and an additional lieutenant to keep up with the training assignments.

- Regarding wellness and annual physicals: last year, there was a side by side pilot trial of two companies, and this year, it was agreed with labor group to go to the single plan. This went very smoothly. They were on site for three weeks total. All of the members were run through the process and some outside agencies were able to come in and take some vacancies. Several of the administrative staff also went through. This will be the standard process moving forward. Asking the Commissioners Association on the insurance plan to consider funding that because the Firefighters Trust Plan does not fund it. That plan is slightly more expensive in a premium standpoint, but when you roll in the cost of doing the annual physicals, it balances a bit more. This could be something to tip the scales in favor of a different insurance plan if the Commissioners continue to stand on an unwillingness to entertain that. Hoping they will revisit that.
- Thanks to Dale who tracks all of this information.
- There was a request from the firefighters union based on June being Pride Month. There was a formal request for consideration of the ability to fly pride flags on station flagpoles. Chief Brooks responded to this request that because of it already being late in the month, there would not be an opportunity to bring this to the board for consideration this year, but this will be a new business items at a future meeting for discussion to possibly be implemented next year. Given that there may be potential for future requests, it may be helpful to have a policy moving forward about the board's permission for what is and is not flown.

X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Roberts – thanks for the opportunity to participate via Zoom. Congratulations to the 12 new members. To clarify, the next TCOMM meeting is July 6th.

Commissioner Kelling – thanks for the data provided. Strong support for the new wellness program and the wellness exams. Appreciate the leadership's efforts to complete the annual report in a timely manner. From an information and transparency perspective to the public, it is an important document. Realizing that the leadership probably has a running estimate in their heads and know what's going on month to month, day to day, and week to week, a document like the annual report really shows the professionalism of the district and that these things are being kept track of and shared. From a strategic planning perspective, the process, much like the annual report process and the analysis and the rigor that goes into that, is much more important than the actual document that is presented or produced, understanding that the environment changes and planning factors change. It is important to go through some kind of a process. The chiefs retreat sounds like a great opportunity to discuss these various issues.

Commission Hetzler – sat in on the EMS meeting, and there was a very quick statement about the 90-day trial being tabled for now. What is the status of that right now?

Chief Brooks responded that at the operations committee, the issue was raised of the BLS transport program from Olympia and the pilot program were running in parallel and in conflict to one another. The chair asked for the pilot program to go back to the Transport Resource Utilization Committee (which is chaired by Chief Brooks). There was a meeting last week to review the program. A couple of chiefs shared that they still had some concerns about it. It was directed to go back through the operations chiefs, who met today. The ops chiefs had a round table to go through the entirety of it. Olympia did announce that they were fully in agreement and will participate. Hoping for a mid-July start.

The next action to be taken is a brief to TCOMM and then a report from the subcommittee to the Medic One Operations Committee at their meeting on July 7th. If approved there, then July 15th could be the implementation date. The big thing is the training required at TCOMM to change the process there about not announcing.

Commissioner Kirkbride – a couple of weeks ago, along with Commissioner Kelling and Chief Brooks, attended the semi-annual executive seminar put on by Thurston Emergency Management. All commissioners are encouraged to attend. There was a report from DNR on the wildfire situation in the state. The entire state has been wetter than normal throughout the spring. This week, there has been flooding in eastern Washington. June 1st is the start of fire season, and this year has been very different than last year. The fields are growing really well so may provide more fuel for fires once they dry out. The bulk of the meeting was spent on an exercise on disaster recovery. There was a theoretical situation of a couple of years after a major disaster; in this case, a windstorm and rain. The focus was identifying the priorities and getting things working again. There were six different breakout sessions. There was a list of some 20-different things that had happened, mostly roads that had been washed out or were in danger situations. They had to come up with the list of the things that would be dealt with first. This exercise went very well. There needs to be more practice in doing this. Commissioner Kirkbride also participated in a webinar on electric vehicles. The fire service agency cannot do anything once an electric car has a battery rupture. Tesla has positioned what is essentially modified shipping containers full of water in wrecking yards so that the batteries can be submerged into the water. In Europe, they are using a device that can be carried to an accident scene on a rig similar to what LeMay uses for big dumpsters. You can roll the car into it or a crane can lift the car into it and put sufficient water in to submerge the battery. There is also a pump that circulates the water so as to not overboil the water. Then it can be taken to the wrecking yard. The gas that comes off of the batteries is very toxic. Electric fire engines were also discussed. A large percentage of battery problems and battery fires and ruptures happen when the vehicle is parked. For this reason, electric cars should never be parked in a garage. Overall it appears that an electric fire engine is not a good idea because of the dangers presented. In the infrastructure bill passed last November by congress, there are over \$8 billion for hydrogen production facilities in four or five different regions across the country. Washington State legislature in 2021 set aside \$150 million for a hydrogen production facility in Douglas County using excess hydro power to make the hydrogen. A private company just announced two weeks ago that in

2025, they are taking over the Centralia steam plant because they are going to shut down coal production and convert it to hydrogen production by buying power from Bonneville Power.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

XII. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 7:07 PM.

***Next Regular Meeting: July 7, 2022 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.***

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Chair
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Melissa Gamble
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Vice Chair
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Rick Kelling
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Commissioner
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Steve Brooks
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ATTEST: District Secretary