

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 6th, 2021

Commissioner Kirkbride
Commissioner Hetzler
Commissioner Gamble
Commissioner Kelling

Board Chair Roberts was excused from the meeting.
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.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice 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: Commissioner Hetzler
Second: Commissioner Kelling
Carried: Unanimous

III. SWEARING IN FOR FIREFIGHTER KYLE HEESACKER

Chief Brooks introduced Firefighter Kyle Heesacker. He noted that FF Heesacker had his badge pinned at the recent Firefighter Recruit graduation ceremony. Firefighter Heesacker thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity, for his B shift co-workers in attendance, and gave a brief biography. He was sworn in by Chief Brooks.

IV. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT - none

V. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft minutes of the April 15, 2021 of the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

B. Warrants:

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) checks numbered 22600 through 22608 for a total amount of \$46,009.28
- Equipment, Repair and Replacement Fund 103 (Acct #66306) check numbered 22609 for a total amount of \$964.91
- 2017B Capital Projects fund 307 (Acct #663B) checks numbered 22610 through 22613 and including electronic fund transfers (EFT) for a total amount of \$107,249.36

C. Payroll 03A 2021 in the amount of \$463,362.56

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler

Second: Commissioner Gamble

Carried: Unanimous

Vice Chair Kirkbride inquired about the \$10,000 for radio equipment. Director Chambers noted the equipment was actually for ancillary equipment such as headsets and intercoms and upgrades to the Brush Trucks and Rescue. Chief Brooks noted the actual radios installed in the engines were provided by TCOMM.

Vice Chair Kirkbride inquired about the change order for the truck - Chief Brooks noted the majority of the change is related to ladder docking or storage position of the ladders on the truck. One side had been configured and installed in a manner that would make it difficult to remove – some metal work was needed to flip their orientation. Vice Chair Kirkbride noted the Board had been briefed previously, and thanked the Chief for the refresher.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

Commissioner Kirkbride reported from the April 21st meeting:

- Pandemic updates – Medic One has thus far expended slightly over \$400,000 and have been reimbursed over \$350,000.
- Discussion regarding Board of County Commissioners adoption of the Medic One recommendation for the levy; it was adopted and will be before the voters on the August primary.
- A letter of support was written and sent to the City of Lacey in support of the proposed 104 bed behavioral health hospital to be constructed in the Hawks Prairie area.
- Much discussion occurred regarding paramedic recruitment. The last open application period was in the month of April – no applicants applied.

Statistics show national average of paramedic retention is 5 years, in Thurston County it is 30 years. The application period will again be opened in June, and if it is not successful, it will be recommended to hire a professional recruiter. Other strategies are being considered as well for incentivizing applicants. It was noted that Medic One is anticipating 12 of the 48 paramedics retiring in the next 12 – 24 months.

- The Budget Committee met today and is preparing two 2022-23 budgets – levy passing and levy failing. If the levy fails, there will be an estimated \$500,000 reduction in expenses necessary for 2022. It was noted the Finance Officer from Medic One does a terrific job and has extremely helpful in the budgeting process.

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

Commissioner Gamble reported from the May 5th meeting:

- TCERN – doing site work on all 21 sites. Permits are done. Fleet mapping is complete. Still working on an interface between Pierce County and WSP. Motorola had provided radios, but they did not have good maintenance program for annual preventive maintenance. TCOMM discussed and passed a budget to upgrade the maintenance program.
- The Sheriff's Office is currently the only law enforcement to have high grade radios; it makes communication difficult among all the other LE groups. The Board discussed budget adjustments to upgrade all LE radios to improve interoperability.
- KXXO has been unable to pay their rent due to COVID, but got a grant to cover those costs. Although rent has been paid, late fees and interest have been building and the Board took action to forgive those costs.

C. City/District Liaison

The meeting April 20th was cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for June.

Chief Brooks did discuss with the City Manager the lack of response to the Board's letter. Manager Spence related he and Mayor Ryder were able to present to the Washington State Transportation Commission; they took the Board's letter and the State DOT response to the Board's letter to the Commission and shared it as an expressed concern. They believe they will be asked back to focus on that issue and thus hopefully have a higher level of influence with the Governor's Office and can perhaps drive changes in policy or increase discussion.

Vice Chair Kirkbride inquired about the City's MOU with DOT – Chief Brooks noted it is an issue of negotiating how the MOU might be carried out. Chief Brooks did say that has been work on encampment cleanup on the DOE site; they conduct regular surveys and have decreased the number of residents at that site.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

Commissioner Hetzler reported from the April 20th meeting:

- Tori Pettis of the WFCAs presented information about the new webpage
- The bulk of the discussion was led by Commissioner Dave Pethia regarding firefighter physicals and reimbursement or payment from the insurance companies.
 - Chief Brooks explained there is a national standard for recommended firefighter physicals. The physical is comprehensive and can be costly; agencies are generally paying directly for this if/when they can afford it. Insurance companies provide a no –cost annual physical to their insured. The advocacy is for the WFCAs providing cost sharing or full reimbursement for a firefighter physical. Of note, the NW Firefighter Trust, a competitor insurer, negotiated with a particular company (Lifescan) who specializes in firefighter physicals to cover the cost as a benefit to their members.
 - The District has for about 6 years, had a company provide FF physicals on site. This year we are pilot testing the Lifescan physical as an alternate choice for our members. About 65% of our members chose this new option.
 - The Chief noted that the WFCAs Health Care Committee had considered cost sharing previously, but found that there was no apparent agreement among the fire service agencies on this process. Commissioner Pethia is trying to build a level of support to go back to the Health Care Committee to encourage a review and some level of reimbursement. The Chiefs Association has also endorsed this concept and Chief Brooks will be writing a letter of support.
- Commissioner Hetzler requested additional educational information about the physicals from the District.
- Next meeting is May 18th with a presentation about the M1 levy.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council - No report; the next meeting is May 7th.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- We remain focused on social media outreach, Community Outreach Coordinator Chris Debell does a good job on reaching out and pulling relevant information together and distributing.
- Coordinator Debell and Chief Schmidt are working through a possible project with a notable U Tube star that contacted the District. He has about 10 million followers and is focused on child education, and was interested in filming for a piece on water rescue. We are continuing to work through this request.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- Station 34 has finally completed the frontage; asphalt and striping are done and the fence and cones removed.
- We received official word that the annexation will be effective June 1st and Station 34 will be in the City
 - Along with Director Chambers, we attended a pre-submission meeting with the City and basically all we will need is a permit. This annexation has saved considerable time, effort and finances related to the Vehicle Repair Facility project.
 - By your next meeting we hope to have concept drawings for the VRF.
- The ladder truck has received final factory clearance and will be heading west soon. There is a group leaving in a couple of weeks for final engine inspections.
- Continuing to work in parallel for St 33 expansion, but are focusing on getting the VRF started. Hope to have some cost estimating information for the VRF at your next meeting.
- Old Station 34 – probably to be renamed to the Training Center - is nearly completed with a light remodel / refresh. Painting has been completed and flooring is underway this week. The Training Division will be moving to old St 34 in early June. Perhaps in June the Board could meet at that station.
- Medic 2 at Yelm continues to work well. We are investigating a spike in the utilities costs, most likely related to apparatus bay heat.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Planning and Response Updates for Pandemic: Staff Report

Chief Brooks shared:

- Staff continues to follow restrictions and we have not been impacted like some of our neighboring agencies.
- We have continued limited participation/support for vaccination events. These will be transitioning to private pharmacies and smaller clinic models.
- St Petes is handling large numbers of COVID and other patients and is frequently on diversion status. Some of the most critical patients have been boarded in the ER because the ICU is at capacity.
- The regularly scheduled meeting with L&I is next Friday to continue discussion of changes (lessening restriction) in the workplace.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Declaration of Surplus Apparatus (Appendix A)

Chief Brooks reported that in 2001 two engines were purchased with bond funds. The have been in service - front line and now reserve – for twenty years. This particular engine went to North Bend for the Training Academy this year and had to be towed / hauled back. It was repaired and put back into service. About two weeks ago it began making noises that were diagnosed as transmission issues. The shop advised that the cost of diagnosing and the likelihood of the need for a new transmission exceeds the value of the apparatus.

About two years ago the District supported Firefighters Crossing Borders with a surplus engine. FFCB is very interested in this engine. Staff believes it is the best course to declare the engine surplus at no value and to turn over to FFCB.

MOTION: To approve the surplus designation for the 2001 Pierce engine.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler
Second: Commissioner Gamble
Carried: Unanimous

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Brooks:

- Thanked the Deputy Chiefs and staff for covering the Board meeting in his absence.
- Updated the Board on the process for the DC Admin process. The posting was open for about 30 days with 8 applicants and 6 moving forward to the evaluation process. We are anticipating a 2 day process near the end of this month, and believe we will find a good fit for us in that group.
- Noted the current labor contract is expiring next year, so we are entering negotiations. Previously we used a third party to help with comparable identification; this year Director Hough graciously volunteered to collect and organize that data. At the same time, he collected data on administrative staff salaries and we will be looking at the information during budget preparations.
- Legislative update:
 - DNR received a comprehensive budget addition allocation of \$125 million for all things wildfire mitigation. Additionally, they received a backfill into the Fire Mobilization Fund from \$8 million to \$8.5 million. The intent was to fund pre-positioning similar to what DNR has done for years, but it was not specifically designated for that purpose.
 - Joint Apprenticeship Training Council (JATC) for the 3 year firefighter training program had a budget decrease from \$1 million to \$700,000.
 - Legislature funded a pilot “Safe Station” pilot, primarily targeted with Tacoma FD allowing fire stations to be used in non-traditional environments such as to host a clinic for behavioral health or other crisis intervention.
 - Helmet distribution program that was initiated last year was funded again this year; it allocates \$20,000 for bike helmets statewide.
 - Expansion for BoFC from 5 to 7 under certain conditions was approved.
 - National 988 system – to expand and increase access for behavioral health crisis response.

Commissioner Kirkbride inquired about funding for DNR for fuel management – Chief Brooks noted that fuel and forestation management were a big item in the funding but not from a dedicated funding source.

- For the Boards next meeting will have the new firefighters for their swearing in, the new rescue and the new fire safety house.
- Lifescan is starting next week for the District. Members have already completed the blood draw. It's 3 hour process and will be held at Station 31.

Commissioner Kirkbride inquired about hearing how Dispatch Heath is doing. Chief noted he had not heard much of them recently, but will do some research.

- Chief presented the financial report from Director Hough. With about 33% of the year expended, we are at about 30% in expenses. Additionally, we received notice that FEMA will be funding the COVID reimbursement requests at 100% up from the 75% they previously provided; this additional funding includes invoices already submitted and reimbursed.
- Chief Schmidt reported on the receipt of a higher than usual number of positive comments from the community. These notes are not just general, but naming members of LFD - PMLt Flowers and Captain Weiss particularly – in their thanks and praise. Chief Schmidt notes that the high number of responses and really personal accounts tells her our members are doing good work in the community.

X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Hetzler – no comments.

Commissioner Gamble – nice to be a part of moving towards normalcy with a swearing in. Also enjoyed begin Commissioner Roberts' secondary for TCOMM.

Commissioner Kelling – listened in to emergency management 101 presentation. Nothing earthshattering, but the message was that leaders have the responsibility to make timely decisions before, during and after disasters. The Community Dispatch for May was great. Would like a brochure or flyer for the Senior B Safe program when it is available.

Commissioner Kelling inquired about the budget development process for LFD, and when the BoFC would actually see the budget proposal. Chief Brooks noted we won't receive revenue projections till late summer, although staff starts projecting before then. The Board typically sees the draft budget in September, a public hearing is generally in late October or early November and the Board must adopt the budget by the end of November. Chief noted he will begin regularly briefing the Board on labor negotiations in June or July.

Commissioner Kelling inquired about the new physical exam pilot this year for LFD. Chief Brooks reported that all members are required to have an annual physical; this year members had the choice of two versions. Medic One provides partial reimbursement for the medics, and the District pays all the rest.

Commissioner Kelling thanked the District for the support in his recent ride-alongs with the crews. He noted it was very worthwhile in his development of understanding the District.

Commissioner Kelling asked Commissioner Kirkbride about the estimated 12 of 48 Medics in the county retiring in the next 12-24 months. Commissioner Kirkbride noted there was much discussion at the EMS Council meeting regarding the lack of applicants, that across the country it is difficult to get applicants for a 24 hour job. The younger group of people being targeted are just not interested in working a 24 hour job.

Commissioner Kirkbride – noted he received an email that all commissioner should have received it – regarding the annual wage and benefit survey. Director Hough noted he had received it and would be responding. He also received notice from King County regarding the summer hazard seminar. He will forward the email to the Board.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

- No suggestions in the suggestion box.
- Correspondence – none beyond what Chief Schmidt highlighted already

XII. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

- None:

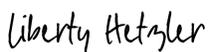
XIII. ADJOURNMENT

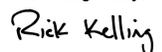
The meeting adjourned as of 6:53 pm.

***Next Regular Meeting: May 20th, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.***

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 ATTEST: District Secretary