

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 20th, 2021

Commissioner Roberts
Commissioner Kirkbride
Commissioner Hetzler
Commissioner Gamble
Commissioner Kelling

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

Chair Roberts 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 Gamble
Second: Commissioner Kirkbride
Carried: Unanimous

III. INTRODUCTION AND SWEARING IN FOR NEW CAREER FIREFIGHTERS

Chief Brooks introduced Firefighter Connor Beard and Paramedic Firefighter Ernie Gudino. FF Beard was a Volunteer Firefighter with Lacey before being hired as career, and has already taken the oath of office. FF Beard introduced himself, and noted he had grown up in the area, and was familiar with the firefighter culture, as his Dad is a firefighter.

PM FF Gudino grew up in California, graduated from high school and realized firefighting was something he wanted to do. At the time, jobs were scarce, so he joined the military to gain firefighting experience. Ten years later, he left the service with his paramedic certification – he served as a special forces medic in the Army - and wanted to continue to serve. He is thankful for the opportunity provided by Lacey Fire to serve the community. Chief Brooks noted that PM FF Gudino has been working with Captain Weiss on identifying a group of people

that might interested in carrying their military medic skills to the civilian world and open a whole new segment of the population for recruitment for medics.

PM FF Gudino 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 May 6th, 2021 of the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

B. Warrants:

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) checks numbered 22630 through 22638 and including electronic fund transfers (EFT) for a total amount of \$153,109.41
- Equipment, Repair and Replacement Fund 103 (Acct#6636) electronic fund transfers (EFT) for a total of \$2,443.55
- 2017B Capital Projects Fund 307 (Acct #663B) checks numbered 22639 through 22641 and including electronic fund transfers (EFT) for a total amount of \$107,878.95

C. Payroll 05A 2021 in the amount of \$1,293,082.59

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride

Second: Commissioner Kelling

Carried: Unanimous

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

Commissioner Kirkbride reported from the May 19th meeting:

- A budget update was given.
- Most discussion dealt with transport delays and diversions – it is currently pretty serious. There are many contributors to this issue, and no easy solutions.

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

No report – the next meeting is June 2nd.

TCOMM is hosting a Town Hall meeting on June 23rd.

C. City/District Liaison

No report – the next meeting is scheduled for June 15th.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

Commissioner Hetzler reported from the May 18th meeting:

- The TCOMM Town Hall meeting is reported to be at 3 PM
- Kurt Hardin provided a presentation on the levy lid lift for Medic One
- The Board voted to endorse the Medic One levy lid lift
- Discussion again about the lack of insurance funding for firefighter physicals
- Discussion about concern for lack of availability of EMT classes
- Next meeting is June 15th

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

Commissioner Kelling reported from the May 7th meeting:

- The 2021 buildable land report was discussed. For fire districts, this would indicate where the county's growth will be in upcoming years.
- TRPC is holding their biannual retreat in July via Zoom
- Next meeting is June 4th

VII. NEW RESCUE AND FIRE SAFETY HOSE DEMONSTRATION

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- The Board had a demonstration of Rescue 31's crane operation and the new Fire Safety House.
- Community Outreach Coordinator DeBell has been about the only car seat inspection technician left in the County, and has been regularly performing individually scheduled car seat installation checks and drop ins. Staff is now exploring the idea of picking back up with the regularly scheduled monthly checks.
- Coordinator DeBell is about read to launch the Senior B Safe Program – she hopes to kick off in June with some “practice” home inspections.
- Staff is considering combining an open house for new Station 34 with the regular September 11th remembrance. Following those events the District is considering having the recognition event for the District at the Training Center. The Board expressed their positivity towards this plan.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- We have team members in the Pierce plant this week conducting final inspections on two new engines. Logistics Director Matt Chambers, Firefighter Dave Perz, Chief Mechanic Adam Cummings, Deputy Chief Dickson and our Hughes sales representative Andy Klein are spending four days at the factory moving through several pages of specifications to ensure all are properly completed.
- Our new ladder truck is currently in Tacoma moving through pre-delivery inspections. Our target is to have it back here by June 14th – flag day.
- Staff is now working through the notice of completion paperwork for St 34.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Planning and Response Updates for Pandemic: Staff Report

Chief Brooks shared:

- CDC has issued updated guidance regarding masking.

Recognizing the lengthy process for new guidelines from L&I, the District essentially published their own masking, distancing and sanitizing guidelines in June. L&I published their guidelines in October. Once vaccines started becoming available, and understanding the lengthy process for change through L&I, the District began asking L&I for updates in early January, and even provided L&I with suggested changes. Despite monthly meetings between L&I and the State Chiefs and the State Council and continued prompting for updates, up until today, there has been no update or change in the guidelines. Today, a notice on the L&I website refers to the CDC recommendations rather than updating their own published guidelines. Therefore, across the State, different agencies are now taking different approaches to masking. The District is not comfortable disregarding L&I's published guidelines without speaking with the Board first. Chief Brooks noted he has spoken with MSO Captain Weiss, Attorney Houser, Director Hardin and District staff, and we feel we are in good standing to follow the CDC guidelines until L&I publishes an update. L&I has also indicated they have no standing for any enforcement actions if there is no actual risk; following the CDC guidelines is accepted as minimizing risk. Masking has been the single biggest issue for our staff, and despite obvious disregard by other agencies our membership has remained compliant for well over a year; moving away from masking in the station and apparatus for fully vaccinated would be a tremendous relief, an environmental improvement and morale booster. We will continue to mask in public spaces and honor business requests, but inside the station and apparatus we would like to follow CDC guidelines. EMS care guidelines have not changed.

The Board discussed the request and expectations for members being in the public, including:

- Masking in all places outside the District facilities and apparatus
- Masking only in those areas/businesses requiring masks

- Consistency or confusion in behavior – when to mask and when unmasking is okay
- The concept the Community at large looks to public servants to set examples; wearing a mask does not necessarily indicate vaccination status (community might assume if we are masked we are not vaccinated) - what messages are we sending?
- Potential workplace concerns about vaccination / vaccination status? The understanding of the District is as an employer we have right to ask about vaccination status and maintain a database or list. And as unvaccinated personnel become vaccinated, they can submit a verification to the District HSO. While there is no guarantee of no discrimination claims, this practice – vaccinated or not – resulting in different personal protection levels requirements is not uncommon in the health care industry. The “have not’s will be known - leadership will know both the vaccination status of a member and whether or not the member is appropriately masking. The District will message that it will not be tolerated that those who are vaccinated disparage those who are not vaccinated.

MOTION: To adopt the CDC interim guidelines for mask wearing, social distancing, etc in Lacey Fire facilities and apparatus, and direct the Chief to develop the details of the policy.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride

Second: Commissioner Hetzler

Carried: Unanimous

Commissioner Hetzler requested a copy of the document be sent to the Board members.

B. Safety Concerns Related to Encampments in Public Right-of-Ways

Commissioner Kirkbride led the discussion regarding the letter sent to DOT, DOE and the City regarding unsanctioned encampments:

- The intent of the Board’s letter is to protect lives and property
- Commissioner Kirkbride expressed an interest in posting the letter on all our social media and sending to newspapers in order to tell citizens what the District does to protect them
- Commissioner discussion:
 - Acknowledgement homelessness is a huge problem, with many agencies and groups working on solutions. Rather than publishing the letter and perhaps damaging relationships, take a step back and talk to other affected agencies and partners
 - While there is appreciation for the letter and its intent, the content of the letter inextricably links the homeless situation with the danger of fire on public lands; the way the letter could be perceived may overshadow any

good intent from the letter. This is a multi-faceted, long term issue that will require collaboration and cooperation on multiple fronts to resolve or address. Are there other options that could meet the intent?

- Publishing without a plan to move forward feels less like cooperative planning together that we would like to promote and foster. Is it possible to bring to smaller groups like the Thurston County Fire groups rather than putting it out for the whole community? It was noted this issue does not impact all fire service agencies equally if at all – perhaps it would be better to have conversations with agencies more like us that are affected.
- At the regular City District liaison meeting, there might be other ways to collaboratively address this issue from a physical perspective, for example clearing underbrush or right of ways or developing other communities of practice or how they have addressed this.
- Since it is a fire problem, there are some simple in Lacey, we have 4-5 camps. Perhaps they can be provided with Coleman camp stoves for cooking, or kerosene heaters when cold – these devices limit the need for open campfires. Perhaps there is grant money. It is not our job to solve encampments – there are a lot of resources trying to do that. Ours is to solve fires - look at why there are fires and solve that.
- In California they have a community led coalition using a formal program to inform about the dangers of wildfire – clear the space around your home, etc The program is called FireWise and has been sanctioned by the State Chiefs – it is more prevalent on the eastern side of the State. It has been discussed at the County Chiefs meetings as something that could/should be implemented. Public outreach would be good, but it will not necessarily reach those in encampments.

The Board requested more information on the FireWise program.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Vehicle Repair Facility Expansion – revised concept drawings and cost estimating

Chief Brooks shared concept drawings for the VRF from the civil engineer and architect. The original plan was to expand that building, but a number of downsides arose with that plan. Several alternatives were discussed and the most efficient expansion came to be a separate building in NE corner of the property. The design meets current needs and provides a modest capacity for the future.

Cost estimating is between \$3.6 million (pre-engineered metal) and \$4 million (stick built). Staff believes there are items within the cost estimation can be deleted, such as a full generator, and save between \$50,000 and \$100,000 of savings. Staff, the city of Olympia and the shop mechanic staff believes this is the right design. For funding, we have sufficient budgeted plus the St 34 contingency to move forward and depending on bid results may not need additional funds. We are reluctant to commit the entire contingency in case it needed elsewhere. As an alternative, it is staff's recommendation that the Board

at least consider additional commissioner bond debt that would be offset by an increase in the lease with the City of Olympia.

The Board asked about the current lease with Olympia – Chief noted it is about \$50,000 – doubling their lease (the square footage is about doubled with this plan) would just about cover the bond debt service on \$1 million. Staff would expect Olympia to sign a lease that approximates covering the debt service, with provisions for an out clause that does not leave Lacey with unfunded debt.

The Board agreed that the concept drawings were reasonable and approved the Chief exploring financing.

X. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Brooks reported:

- Today was the wrap-up of the annual physicals with Lifescan; about 60 – 70% of our membership participated in this pilot program.
- This is EMS Week – we received a proclamation from the Board of County Commissioners.
- We have Firefighter Murphy’s memorial flag displayed in the lobby – it will be added to the State Firefighters Memorial in mid-August.
- He participated with Director Hardin in an informational meeting with City of Lacey on the Medic One levy restoration.

XI. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Hetzler – what is the date for the Deputy Chief Candidate forum? (Monday 24th; it begins at 4 pm)

Commissioner Gamble – no comments for the group, and it was nice to see the new equipment.

Commissioner Kelling – no comments

Commissioner Kirkbride – the District made a great decision to purchase the Rescue rig, and is also anxious to see the set up of the safety house and the kids participation with it. Good job to all those involved with it.

Commissioner Roberts – can the Board get a synopsis of the Deputy Chief candidates? (Director Teri Perrine will send out). Also, good job on the Rescue Rig.

XII. CORRESPONDENCE

- No suggestions in the suggestion box. Commissioner Kirkbride suggested this item be removed from the agenda – if a suggestion is received, it can be added to the Administrator’s report.
- Correspondence

XIII. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

- None:

XIV. REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. In Accordance with RCW 42.30.140(4)(a) regarding discussion of collective bargaining strategies
- B. In accordance with RCW 42.30.110 (1)(g) to review the performance of a public employee
- C. In accordance with RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency litigation or potential litigation

The Board adjourned for an executive session at 7:40 PM for 30 minutes. The Chair announced the session was to be extended by 10 minutes at 8:10 PM

The Board reconvened from executive session at 8:21 PM with no action taken.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 8:22 PM.

*Next Regular Meeting: June 3rd, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.*

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 ATTEST: District Secretary