

**THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE**

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**July 15, 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.

The Board Chair asked to move the executive session between Old Business items A and B on the agenda.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**MOTION:** To approve the agenda as modified.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride  
Second: Commissioner Hetzler  
Carried: Unanimous

**III. SWEARING IN FOR DEPUTY CHIEF MICHAEL CEROVSKI**

The Chief welcomed and introduced Deputy Chief of Administration Michael Cerovski, who in turn introduced his family and provided a short background of his fire service career. Chief Cerovski noted he has been in the Fire Service for 27 years, with 24 of them at Loveland Fire in Colorado. His background includes Operations, Administration, Community Safety and Training. He stated his family is excited to be in Washington and especially in the Lacey community. Chief Brooks administered the Oath of Office.

**IV. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT –**

Mr Doug Hartz noted the minutes (this meeting and last meeting) should reflect attendance via Zoom.

**V. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Draft minutes of the July 1, 2021 of the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

B. Warrants:

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) checks numbered 22699 through 22728 and including bank drafts and electronic fund transfers (EFT) for a total amount of \$722,980.31
- Equipment, Repair and Replacement Fund 103 (Acct#6636) check numbered 22730 for a total amount of \$11,562.35
- 2017B Capital Projects Fund 307 (Acct #663B) bank drafts and electronic fund transfers (EFT) for a total amount of \$79,927.31

C. Payroll 07A 2021 in the amount of \$1,527,764.79

**MOTION:** To approve the consent agenda.

Motion: Commissioner Gamble  
Second: Commissioner Kirkbride  
Carried: Unanimous

**VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A. Thurston County Medic One

No report – the next meeting is July 21<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Hetzler will be attending in lieu of Commissioner Kirkbride.

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

Commissioner Roberts reported from the July 7<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- Commissioner Roberts will send the quarterly newsletter to the Board
- Completed factory acceptance testing of the microwave and Motorola systems, fleet mapping templates are completed by the user agencies, and TCOMM has agreed to an enhanced warranty plan for subscribers on the equipment.
- Looking at a new phone system; in the last month it has failed twice, most recently on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July last weekend. The next meeting (Aug 4<sup>th</sup>) will take up a remedy for that. The new system doesn't appear to be able to handle the volume; both failures were during heavy volume.
- Financially, all departments are under budget and revenue is 15.7% higher than this time a year ago.
- The Intergovernmental Agreement has been completed by all 17 agencies.

C. City/District Liaison

No report; normally would meet in August. Chief Brooks will confirm if the established date in August will work.

Lacey annexation of Capital City Golf Course and the small circular neighborhood to the west of Rainier Road has been finalized, but Lacey has voted to delay the impacts until Sept 1<sup>st</sup>. The District is currently working with East Olympia Fire District 6 on the on the transition; it will be a modest increase to Lacey Fire and a modest decrease to East Olympia Fire.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

No report – the next meeting is July 20<sup>th</sup>

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

Commissioner Kelling reported from the July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting:

- Had day one of a two day retreat on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, and discussed values and goal. Day two is July 26<sup>th</sup> and we will be looking at covid recovery and goals for the next two years.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- The Senior Safe @ Home project is nearing the go live.
- We are beginning in person outreach for community requests.
- Staff is beginning the initial stages of planning for Sept 11<sup>th</sup> which includes our memorial observance of 9-11 and an open house for Station 34.
- We are also currently taking reservations for use of District facilities.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- He has reengaged with RFM on moving forward with cost projections for St 33.
- The TEC (Training and Education Center) is about 99% complete and are at the move-back-in-stage. Great work by the Logistics and IT teams to get that ready.
- The old ladder truck suffered catastrophic transmission failure and we are awaiting a replacement part, which has been ordered and is anticipated by end of next week. Fortunately, we had asked Olympia to keep their old truck until the end of the month, and Chief Mechanic Adam Cummings is estimating the old Truck can be fixed and back in service by then. Unfortunately, due to the limited space issues at the VRF, our new Truck can't be upfitted until the old Truck has been fixed.

- The two new engines are still at Hughes and area anticipated to be about a week out. Hughes is waiting on some items from the Pierce factory.

## VII. OLD BUSINESS

### A. COVID Emergency Declaration Status

Chief Brooks noted the District's emergency declaration status could be repealed or we could wait until a change at the State level. The Board noted a preference in waiting until the Governor makes a change.

## REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

In Accordance with RCW 42.30.110 (1)(d) to review negotiations on the performance of a publicly bid contract, the Board recessed into the Executive Session at 5:51 PM, for an anticipated 20 minutes. No action will be taken in the Executive session.

The Board resumed the open meeting at 6:11 PM.

### B. Rice Fergus Miller (RFM) Service Order 04 for VRF design through construction: Staff report and potential action

Chief Brooks acknowledged and thanked Olympia Fire Chief Mechanic Adam Cummings for his attendance at the meeting and for the summary document provided to the Board regarding the VRF partnership and a cost analysis. Mr Cummings thanked the Board, and noted they value their relationship with the District and with all the districts they serve.

Commissioner Kirkbride commented that the decision made by this Board a number of years to contract with Olympia Fire Department for vehicle services was excellent. He noted their quality of work, expertise, training and background, and ability to solve and resolve problems is exceptionally well-liked. Commissioner Kirkbride expressed appreciation for their service. He also appreciated the cost analysis provided.

Chair Roberts thanked Mr Cummings for his attendance and the summary document provided.

**MOTION:** Move to approve RFM service order #04, for VRF design through construction

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler  
Second: Commissioner Kelling  
Carried: Four Ayes, One Nay

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Medic 2 Contract amendment

Chief Brooks explained that Director Hardin committed to seeking additional funding for the relocation of Medic 2 during COVID. The Chief noted we had an existing agreement with Medic One for costs of the unit operations, but not the facilities. With the relocation Director Hardin has been able to secure additional funding to help offset the costs of the necessary facility alterations and the facility rental.

Director Chambers noted that there are still some outstanding small issues that need to be completed.

Commissioner Kirkbride noted he insisted that the budget for Medic One starting in 2022 include the District receiving the full costs of being in their present location. He also noted full reimbursement depended on the outcome of the Medic One levy.

**MOTION:** To approve the amendment to the Medic 2 contract as presented.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride

Second: Commissioner Hetzler

Carried: Unanimous

**IX. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Chief Brooks reported:

- The District has started seeing significant changes in availability of healthcare resources. In 2019 we were discussing shortage of beds in the Emergency Dept and the boarding of patients there that should have been admitted; we had a respite in 2020 with COVID. Now we are seeing a rebound; through July 1<sup>st</sup> the District has seen a call volume increase of 14% over 2020, and a 3% increase over our record year of 2019. There has not been a corresponding increase in healthcare resources. St Petes continues to struggle to bring on the additional beds they were awarded under the Certificate of Need. What was designed to be an approximate 50 bed ER is trying to navigate over 100 patients and this trickles down to the end user in the field. There have been 4 hour waits to move a patient from an ambulance gurney to an ER bed. Calls continue in the community and there are no ambulances for transport; this further ties up engine companies in the field waiting for an ambulance. Private ambulance, the hospital and even the District are also facing staffing shortages, with resulting inability to staff sufficient resources and remaining staff working long hours. The situation is challenging for crews and hard on morale.

- District staff have been in communication and working with the hospitals, Medic One, and private ambulance to develop alternate and creative strategies to navigate the situation.
- Private ambulance is sharing their staffing 72 hours in advance. Medic One is trying to engage two EMTs to create an intermediary handoff to release the ambulance even if a bed is not available at the ER. The District is trying to staff an additional aid unit when possible – all the District aid units are licensed as transport units. The District is ceasing support for wildland mobilizations for the near or foreseeable future.
- Director Hardin is working on engaging Madigan to take patients, and work with the Urgent Care facilities to see if they would have some capacity.
- Dispatch Health is looking at putting on a second unit.
- Capital Medical Center is working on making changes to be better community partners.
- New legislation for law enforcement (LE) is having an impact on fire service response. Staff has been meeting with LE to understand the impacts more clearly, and appreciates their engagement and transparency and attempt at consistency across the LE community. Essentially, if no crime is being committed, LE can't respond. While this takes effect formerly July 25<sup>th</sup>, the crews have already seen impacts on certain types of calls where LE would normally have responded with the District and they no longer can go. The mindset shift we have to work on with our members is more evaluative than you call, we come. Safety for our members is critical; staff is working on guidelines for expectations and safety. Fire service legislative committees are already working on this issue with law enforcement.
- The District has received the unanticipated resignation of our Fire Psychologist Dr Jeff Holguin. While he will transition care for any District member he has been seeing, Chief Schmidt has been working on locating other resources as a short term stop gap. Staff has met with other clinicians who may be resources and has accelerated working on a budgeted Director position with both administrative and clinical background. The District wishes the best for Dr Jeff and his family.
- Chief Cerovski has had an action packed first week and is getting to know his administrative staff.
- On a REMS mobilization, we are swapping out one REMS member on Saturday for another to finish out a two week commitment.

## **X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Hetzler – it's been a busy two weeks. Prior to COVID, when we had HOA meetings in one of our meeting spaces, a Commissioner would try to attend and speak; the HOA meetings start in the fall. Commissioner Hetzler is excited about the Senior Safe program starting because of the program itself and it

provides a topic for the HOA meetings. Commissioner Hetzler would also like a binder for BoFC meetings.

Commissioner Gamble – this is an overwhelming situation for staff with the shortages in healthcare accessibility and behavioral health changes; she is glad to hear agencies are working on as group and finding creative ideas to support patient care and the community. As a group, we will be seeing a lot of changes in the next few years as we can't sustain where we are right now with the system. She is excited to be part of this group and to watch how the changes occur over the next couple of years and to be part of the process. Commissioner Gamble is excited about the Senior Safe program kicking off. She also requested a binder for the BoFC meetings.

Commissioner Kelling – there is a saying in the military that leaders manage transition – thank you all of you for managing and working through this. It is your responsibility / our responsibility to give our members the most clear guidance possible and to help them navigate those situations that Commissioner Gamble just described. They are out there on the front lines serving everyday. The TRPC population data from the census has been posted; he will send a link to the Board. He will also not be able to attend the next meeting. He also requested a binder.

Commissioner Kirkbride – following the increase in fire calls are we getting toned out for residential burns / trash burns or smoke complaints? They are usually an ORCAA issue. However, the Governor has declared a statewide burn ban – this seems it is no longer an air quality issue but a fire issue – do we respond to extinguish? Will we reevaluated given the Governor's order?

Chief Brooks noted we have not changed our policy – unless there is a threat or perceived safety issue where we will respond to at least evaluate, the officers have been empowered and generally will handle the issue with a phone call to inform and educate. We can certainly discuss the policy / practice, but even with the new order, the risk to the members doesn't change unless an imminent threat.

Commissioner Roberts – welcome to Chief Cerovski. Thank you to the Board for discussion and coming to a decision and how we all work together. Thank you.

## **XI. CORRESPONDENCE**

We continue to receive thank yous from the community. The number of people reaching out to say thank you is increasing. We were contacted directly from family members regarding water response to Hicks Lake – even through unsuccessful, they appreciated all our efforts.

## **XII. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chat – a comment from an attendee while we were in executive session notifying us he was leaving.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned as of 6:55 PM.

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

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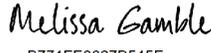
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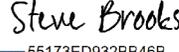
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 ATTEST: District Secretary