

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

August 19, 2021

Commissioner Roberts
Commissioner Kirkbride
Commissioner Hetzler
Commissioner Gamble
Commissioner Kelling

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

Commissioner Hetzler attended remotely.

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. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT – none

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Draft minutes of the August 5, 2021 of the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.
- B. Warrants:
 - General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) checks numbered 22747 through 22769 and including bank drafts and electronic fund transfers (EFT) for a total amount of \$534,236.73

- Equipment, Repair and Replacement Fund 103 (Acct#6636) bank draft number DFT00789 and electronic fund transfer number 5005 for a total of \$653.61
- 2017B Capital Projects Fund 307 (Acct #663B) bank draft number DFT00790 and electronic funds transfer numbers 5009 and 5010 for a total amount of \$91,127.33

C. Payroll 08A 2021 in the amount of \$1,377,145.07

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda.

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride

Second: Commissioner Gamble

Carried: Unanimous

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

Commissioner Kirkbride reported from the August 18th meeting:

- The Medic One levy passed and was certified by the Auditor on August 17th. It was noted the yes vote was slightly higher than in 1999 when the original permanent levy was put in place.
- A budget adjustment for 2022 was made. \$250,000 was added to BLS support. BLS support is several categories; each agency receives a lump sum of \$15,000 for BLS agency support, each agency receives an allocation for EMS supplies based on historical usage and each agency receives a per call allocation based on a formula and the previous year's call volume. Per call allocation will increase with this budget adjustment.
- Discussed ambulance delay issues; private ambulance continues to struggle with turnover and staffing. Medic One activated a "high probability unit" (HPU) staffed with Medic One employees between 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM to supplement transport resources. Olympic Ambulance has contributed \$12,000 to the HPU and Medic One will fund the balance of costs. Since this was not a budgeted item, Medic One intends to pull funds from training and citizen CPR. Six fire agencies do transport and do not bill; others transport and bill; this creates an imbalance in transport – some BLS patients are charged and some are not.
- An update on HB 1310 was provided.
- Re-elected the alternate representing the EMS Council to the West Region EMS council.
- Budget is where it should be at this time of the year.
- Discussed the Governor's vaccine mandate discussion where all EMTs and PMs must be vaccinated. Some Council representatives indicated this is a problem as there are low (responder) vaccination rates in their areas.

It was proposed and passed for the Council to draft a letter decided to draft a letter to the Governor outlining the concerns about the mandate for vaccination and no option for testing in lieu of. The letter will be copied to Department of Health and the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). The BoCC took action last week that dealt with this issue and identified the unintended consequences of this mandate which could be significant loss of responders.

- Mark Nelson, East Olympia Fire Chief, is retiring; East Olympia has contracted with Southeast Thurston Fire Authority (SETFA); Fire Chief Mark King will assume Fire Chief's duties for both agencies.

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

No report – next meeting September 1st. Commissioner Gamble will attend in place of Commissioner Roberts.

C. City/District Liaison

Commissioner Roberts reported from the August 17th meeting:

- Chief Brooks spoke about HB1310 and the ongoing consequences experienced by fire service responders on responses. He noted that Lacey PD leadership has been a good partner in working with us on this. LPD is launching new level of service effective around Sept 1st; 4 FTEs to work as Designated Crisis Responders (DCRs). Hopefully these DCRs will stand in the mental health crisis gap where what law enforcement cannot respond and fire is not equipped to respond. We are hearing from the crews that the LPD officers are doing everything they can to communicate well, but there is still difficult decision making for crews regarding response when it is not safe to do so. Commissioner Roberts noted that law enforcement is operating under difficult circumstances, where if they respond outside of the HB1310 parameters, a State investigation likely ensues with potential consequences including personal and civil liability and permanent decertification. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor intend to speak with the legislators about the unintended consequences of this House Bill.
- The vaccine mandate was discussed.
- Discussion was held regarding our hospitals and their capacity; Madigan is now participating in those capacity discussions, but have their own staffing issues as well.
- The District shared its intent to host the 9-11 memorial event.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

No report – the next meeting is September 21st

Commissioner Hetzler noted the Fall Conference registration is now open. The Commissioners are encouraged to check their schedules.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

No report – the next meeting is September 3rd.

Chair Roberts expressed her appreciation for the TRPC synopsis Commissioner Kelling provided for last BoFC meeting when he was unable to attend.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- The District participated the last two Wednesdays in the Lacey Police Summer Cruise. The Seagraves staffed by Chiefs Brooks and Cerovski participated in the parade through pre-plotted neighborhood routes. An Engine, when available, also participated. The events were well received.
- We continue to plan for the 9-11 memorial observance.
- We are planning to hopefully restart car seat checks in September on a scheduled basis, we continue to monitor COVID conditions and restrictions.
- Crews have been able to participate in a few community events, such as National Night Out.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- The crews are back in a ladder truck; once again we are using Olympia's 26 year old apparatus. Our old ladder truck has the transmission in and the shop is working on getting the truck back in service. Once it is out of the shop work can begin on the new ladder truck; there is equipment fitting continuing on the new truck while it waits its turn in the shop. The new engines are also being upfitted and readied to go into service. Motorola has been on site working on the new radios provided by TCOMM.
- Waiting for updates from the architect and engineers on cost estimating for St 33.
- We jointly submitted with TCOMM to the City of Lacey the permit for the new generator at the TEC; the goal is to have it installed by the end of the year.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. COVID Emergency Declaration Status –

We are seeing community numbers trend upward. The hospitals are having a lot of admissions. The hospitals have been on round robin diversion consistently for nearly two weeks. Transport resources continue to be an issue. We are also starting to discuss logistics of a 3rd vaccination.

B. Intergovernmental EMS Contract Amendment #1

This has been before the Board previously but there have been some minor adjustments – nothing substantive - from the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office and signatures are again required. This is the empowering contract that allows us to work with Medic One to back bill for the costs incurred in moving Medic 2 and for ongoing costs such as utilities.

Directors Hough and Chambers and Chief Cerovski are working to collect all the documentation requested for reimbursement.

Staff recommends signing the agreement.

MOTION: To accept the Amendment #1 to Intergovernmental EMS contract between Thurston County and Lacey Fire District 3

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride

Second: Commissioner Kelling

Carried: Unanimous

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for Vehicle Exhaust Capture

Chief Brooks explained this is one of primary grants available to the fire service from Homeland Security; the other is the SAFER grant which helps with staffing. The District has been successful previously on an AFG grant and has received two of the SAFER grants. This AFG grant is for obtaining equipment – in our case exhaust capture for apparatus – and has no ongoing obligation. The intent of the install is to reduce risks to firefighter health from vehicle exhaust.

We had originally hoped to include vehicle exhaust capture in the Capital Facilities bond, but with COVID driving cost increases on current projects, changes from cost estimates from 6 years ago, higher than projected costs for other primary projects, we triaged it out of the Capital Facilities bond project list. With this grant we can now retrofit Stations 33 and 35, but the grant caps the request amount to \$100,000 per station so it will only partially fund Station 31. Our obligation under the grant is \$14,681.45.

Grant management takes some staff time, but we have history and experience in that activity. Staff recommends acceptance of the grant.

MOTION: To accept the Assistance to Firefighters Grant for Vehicle Exhaust Capture.

Motion: Commissioner Kelling
Second: Commissioner Gamble
Carried: Unanimous

B. Department of Labor and Industries FIIRE program

Chief Brooks explained previous legislation started a pilot program to reduce FF injury and illnesses. We applied for the trial quarter, which we are currently in, and need to opt in or out for the balance of 2021 and through September 2022. If the District chooses to participate, we receive a reduction in our L&I premiums for the period of participation. There is some work load which we believe is manageable, and the benefit derives to both the District and members in improved safety and reduced L&I costs. Participation requires acceptance from the Board and Labor Union as well. Staff recommends participation in the FIIRE program.

MOTION: To authorize Lacey Fire District 3 to participate in Labor and Industries FIIRE program

Motion: Commissioner Kirkbride
Second: Commissioner Gamble
Carried: Unanimous

C. Vaccination Mandate for Certified Healthcare Providers

Chief Brooks explained that the impacts seen almost overnight with changes in law enforcement response from HB 1310 were some of the greatest seen for our members in a long time, and it was difficult to imagine something that would overshadow it. The directive issued last week – mandatory vaccinations - has accomplished this with its potential for impacts both personal and professional; their careers, livelihood, and ability to deliver the service they signed up to deliver long term.

We are trying to be proactive, but seem to be in a reactive position with almost daily interpretations, new information, clarifications, etc. We are working with legal counsel on this issue. What we have now tells us that all certified personnel – EMTs, PMs, and even including a firefighter with a CPR card who responds to medical emergencies – will be impacted by this.

Staff is proposing a forum for the members, Board representatives and staff. We would like to hold the forum in August to have September for implementation planning, in person and via Zoom. We believe it is important to hear all the

members concerns and have open discussion. This is huge morale issue, and our members are personally, professionally and emotionally impacted. The target date for the forum is Monday, August 30th, 0900, in the BoFC and anticipated for no longer than 2 hours.

Chief Brooks recommend this be an agenda item at the next BoFC meeting in case members want to be heard in an open public forum, and it is probable this needs discussion in executive session related to contract negotiations required for impacts to working conditions.

Commissioner Roberts agreed a forum is a great idea, and that it is important that members are heard. The mandate may affect what we can and can't do, but hearing the concerns of members is essential. Commissioner Roberts stated she can attend, and suggests Commissioner Gamble to attend if possible. Commissioners Kirkbride and Hetzler also said they could attend if needed. It is the preference of the Chair to not have a quorum of the Board present to allow the members the most freedom in their comments.

Commissioner Gamble indicated her willingness to attend.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Brooks:

- The District hosted a forum on HB 1310 yesterday at the TEC and Chief Brooks participated with TCOMM executive staff, the State Association of Firefighters, the State Fire Chiefs, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC). All parties are starting dialog about what a constructive fix for the unintended consequences of this law enforcement reform could look like. All are agreed the proper forum for this is the legislature as they created the legislation and so is the only forum for correction. In many cases, WASPC needs to be the lead agency and we want to support them, but other agencies and their impacts need to be highlighted as well. All are interested in building a unified front and voice for that. One of the ideas is better funding and support for a new tier of response for mental and behavioral health - what used to be called mental health professionals and are now called Designated Crisis Responders - if law enforcement can't go and fire service is not the appropriate response and we are not equipped to go, the DCRs can fill potentially this gap. The DCRs are the ones that can make determinations for involuntary treatment; if this a solution, it needs to be better funded.
- We are continuing to be challenged with transport resources. Medic One has started staffing the high probability unit (HPU) but the ability to staff with outside EMTs is still in process. The HPU has already complete several transports when the private ambulance was not available. We are using our Aid Units more often when we used to, but when they are transporting they are not available for another response.

- Chief Brooks and Medic One staff met with Director Clem from Olympic Ambulance; Director Clem noted their biggest issue is staffing shortages turnover. In a “normal” year turnovers run about 13 -14 positions and right now they are at 21. Hiring, training and obtaining local certification all take time. The Thurston County Medical Program Director (MPD) is coordinating with MPDs in Mason and Kitsap Counties where Olympic has a presence and working on an agreement so their units could assist in Thurston without going through the full local certification process.
- Reminder about Lt Paulsen’s retirement on Sunday and Monday. An open air lunch is scheduled Sunday the 29th at the TEC and the send off is Monday AM about 0730 on the apron at Station 31.
- The annexation around the Golf Course has been completed and takes effect September 1st. The District will get slightly larger with this annexation with property formerly in East Olympia District 6, picking up 62nd / 64th loop which includes Hoskins Field airport.
- The Chief noted he will be out of office a good portion of next week.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kelling – Ditto to Commissioner Gamble. Despite all the pressures the District continues to provide professional service. Congratulations to the staff for achieving the grants. Our HOA had some National Night Out support- thank you for that. Congratulations to Lt Paulsen – 30 years is awesome.

Commissioner Hetzler – no comments. These are crazy times. Lots of hard work and hours and effort by everyone and it is amazing the amount of time it takes to deal with each of these challenges.

Commissioner Gamble – thank you for all updates on the many issues affecting the District. Many are factors make this job difficult – thank you for your work and the members’ work.

Commissioner Kirkbride – echo Commissioners Gamble and Kelling about the challenging times we have. The fire service in this country and this District pre-COVID was on cusp of evolution of (EMS) delivery of service, but that came to a screeching halt. We are now tied up with COVID related, hospital related, and transport related issues with no clear understanding of when it will end. Hats off to everyone in this agency and everyone associated with fire service, who continues to come to work, working the problems, dealing with issues and to keep trying to provide great service to our citizens. Special thanks to Chief Dickson and staff for the grants; they always a challenge to put together. On a personal note, thankful for technology; the new hearing aids have a “mask” setting that allows everyone to sound perfectly normal at the meetings!

Commissioner Roberts – add commendation to what has already been said – this is amazing work that is happening now with everything this agency is facing. A reminder to take a moment to take care of yourself; sometimes in a crisis that gets

forgotten. Will not be in person at the next meeting but wil try to Zoom in.
Commissioner Kirkbride will lead the group.

X. CORRESPONDENCE

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Dickson - encourages everyone to vote in the upcoming election (mid terms).

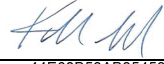
XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:30 PM.

*Next Regular Meeting: September 2nd, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.*

Chair
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 Liberty Hetzler
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 Commissioner

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 Rick Kelling
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 Commissioner

DocuSigned by:

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 Vice Chair

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 Melissa Gamble
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 Commissioner

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 Steve Brooks
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 ATTEST: District Secretary