

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

April 7, 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 Kelling and Commissioner Gamble were excused.

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 Roberts

Second: Commissioner Hetzler

Carried: Unanimous

III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A. Draft minutes of the March 17, 2022, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as amended.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler

Second: Commissioner Roberts

Carried: Unanimous

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

No report – the next meeting is April 20th.

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

Commissioner Roberts reported from the April 6th meeting:

- Financially, February sales and excise were above. All department budgets are looking good. Administrative is just slightly high. TCOMM is 7.4% above February of last year as far as tax collection.
- Executive report: Wendy reported that they have been out meeting with their various members. The Chief said that their meeting is not until the middle of April.
- The radio system is progressing well. The radios for law enforcement are here. Training is going well. The only slight glitch has to do with consoles, and hopefully they will be installed by the end of May. If not, Wendy has indicated that she will wait until after July 4th.
- Legislative update: Senate Bill 555 proclaims that TCOMM employees are also first responders. This should not make any difference as far as training for them, but it is a good thing to be deemed a first responder.
- TCOMM also won an AWC wellness award. It reduces the health premiums by a small percentage.
- The only business that was taken care of is Juneteenth, which is now a federal holiday. A motion was approved to add it to the current federal holidays for non-represented folks. For represented folks, when bargaining comes, it is likely to come up as an agenda item with them.
- The next meeting will be the first Wednesday of May.

C. City/District Liaison

No report – the next meeting is scheduled tentatively for April 19th.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

No report – the next meeting is April 19th.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

Commissioner Kelling attended the last meeting. Commissioner Kirkbride shared on his behalf:

- In the next 12 months, there will be some reorganization within TRPC staff, including the planned departure of the deputy director and the planning and policy director. Two new positions were approved by the council: finance and HR manager and transportation manager. A third planning manager position is proposed, which would create a net gain of 1 FTE.
- The planned organizational structure will retain emphasis on fiscal accountability and transportation planning.
- Transportation planning and management remain a significant focus for the council as the I-5 corridor design high capacity transit and both federal and state transportation resources become more available. The I-5 corridor design includes the Nisqually River crossings and alternate routes including a proposed bypass of the Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater metropolitan areas.
- There has been an open review for the citizens, a public open house for the last month. It closes on the 28th. The response on that was to focus on the existing corridor. They decided not to investigate the bypass concept because of environmental issues, cost issues, et cetera. They are working on, for the next year or two, the strategies to improve access from Tumwater Boulevard to Mounts Road.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- Continued increasingly strong demand for activities in the community. Chris DeBell is triaging those. It is anticipated with better weather that there will be more and more requests for on-site presence, so there are attempts to manage those expectations. There is a planned May 7th partnership with the Red Cross for a smoke detector outreach event. Chris has had some challenges coordinating with the HOA of the identified community, so that will be postponed.
- There continues to be strong demand for the Senior Safe At Home program with good feedback.
- Just reopened for scheduling of the facilities on April 1st. All restrictions have been removed and substation rooms are available as well.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- There have been several issues. Chief Cerovski has been working with the HVAC vendor on issues with the heating systems in all of the bays. There were some corrosion issues that are being remedied. There were HVAC

failures at Station 33. It is anticipated that with these things reaching the ends of their life cycle, that those items will need to be planned and budgeted for.

- The new assistant chief of logistics started this week and is trying to manage facility maintenance and repair.
- There is an new hot water heating system at Station 31. The one at Station 35 has been replaced as well.
- Next week, repairs will be made on Station 35 where damage was sustained to the overhead door. That will be a 2-day project, and they will not be able to secure the door overnight, so an overnight security company will be hired.
- Continuing to work through applying for permits for the VRF expansion, hopefully in June. Chief Cerovski will be reengaging with Rice Fergus Miller and the engineers next week when he is back.
- They are working on the final punch list for all of the Station 34 warranty items. They did some replacement this week of the siding material that was damaged. Still waiting on remedy of the shower situation where there are some drain issues. A proposal should be coming in next week.
- Related to the Engine 35 damage, the parts should be in and the engine should be able to go in for repairs when the recruit academy ends, right around June 1st, with a 2- to 3-month repair time. The total out of service time will end up being about 6 months.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- A. COVID Emergency Declaration Status: reopened on April 1st. Continuing to trend very low with no staff impacts and with low occurrences in the community. Accommodations were adjusted for members who were working under accommodations. They all accepted the updated accommodations, including the one member who had previously declined – the member has now returned. Now, the only accommodation is that members working under accommodation have to wear an N-95 mask while engaged as a healthcare provider. Other members can wear a surgical mask. No masks are required in the station, in vehicles, or on service calls – only on EMS calls.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Proposed Amendment to the Medic One ALS Agreement: Discussion/Potential Action:
- Also entering into contract negotiations for the 2023 contract. This was an amendment that was made last year when an emergency move was made for Medic Two out of the existing housing, which was formerly at the Southeast Thurston headquarters. Medic One agreed at that time to cover the costs associated with the move into the apartment. They did that under their federal declaration and the COVID-related expenses they were having. The director and now-interim assistant director, since the director moved over to public health, came forward a couple months back and said that they needed to re-look at that lease agreement. Last year, the lease

was only renewed for one year, so it was only for 2021. There was no accommodation for coming into 2022, how that was going to be handled. They proposed that they are willing to continue to cover those costs only as long as they are still receiving federal dollars under the emergency declaration for COVID-related expenses. They did not reduce the potential total amount of \$45,000, which is the same as last year. But they are asking to be absolved of any responsibility for that liability following the removal or the termination date of the federally declared emergency. This would mean that the liability would shift to 50% of the entire lease over to the district. Additionally, they ask to remove the cost of utilities because their statement was that they do not have utilities separate for the other two leases (inside fire stations), so those are absorbed by the agency into the cost in those.

- Chief Brooks shared that he has concerns about the impacts of this, that because it is an out-of-district unit, the district should not bear the sole responsibility. It was taken on to protect the members at the time, with no guarantee that Medic One would step up. Now that they have had an opportunity to budget for and plan for this, staff's recommendation would be to not accept these amendments but to request that Medic One fulfill its obligation to cover the costs of both the rent and the utilities for the balance of this year.
- It was discussed with the director, that if this is deemed excessive or not acceptable to Medic One, to work with them on the back half of the year. It was just a two-year lease, so the obligation ends at the end of this year. On the back half of the year, it would be possible to work together to look for alternative appropriate housing that they are more satisfied with costs. But they need to take the primary responsibility for that, since they are the ones who are contracting directly in all other cases for the lease. The district took this on just because of the need to protect the members.
- Commissioner Hetzler asked when the emergency declaration expired. Chief Brooks responded that the end date has not been announced, and it has been extended through June or July as of right now. It is likely that the declaration might be lifted in the July time frame, which is why they only wanted to be committed to the first half of the year. There is not a definitive timeline yet.
- Commissioner Roberts stated that it could end up being a huge liability financially. She asked what happens if they say no. Commissioner Kirkbride related Medic One was built out because District 2 at the time, which is now Southeast, refused to man it unless they were paid 100%. The one thing that was critically important to the commissioners at that time, and still today, is that this service to Southeast should not cost our citizens anything, because we are gaining no benefit out of it. It would be contrary to policy about providing services without full compensation outside of the boundaries of the district per the RCW and per the internal policy.

MOTION: To not accept the EMS contract proposed Amendment 2.

Motion: Commissioner Roberts.

Second: Commissioner Hetzler.

Carried: Unanimous.

B. Support for Chief Brooks as candidate for Washington Fire Chiefs President

- Chief Brooks shared that he has been a member of the Washington Fire Chiefs for 17 years. The affiliation there has benefitted the organization and statewide fire service. Chief Brooks shared that he has made sure that local issues are prioritized first and has made sure to have the right support and leadership structure locally, but feels that he can help with the next generation of developing leadership in the Washington Fire Chiefs. It feels like a strategic time for him in his career, after some discussions with the incumbent president. It is a one-year term, but typically individuals stay for two cycles. Typically the president is an incumbent member of the board of directors. There are seven regions across the state. Chief Brooks is currently the representative to the Western Fire Chiefs Association in the State of Washington, which position on the board would be vacated because the president position stands alone. The current chief would be interested in taking on the Western Fire Chiefs representative role. The deputy chiefs are supportive of this move.
- Commissioner Kirkbride clarified that Chief Brooks is currently already active in the association. Chief Brooks clarified that he has been on the Board of Directors for two years and is the chair of the legislative committee. Commissioner Kirkbride commented that Chief Brooks has already proven that he can serve there and work effectively.
- Commissioner Hetzler questioned what is needed from the commissioners to move forward with this. The commissioners would need to authorize the chair to sign the letter of support.

MOTION: To authorize Chair Kirkbride to sign a letter in support of Chief Brooks' position as president of the Washington State Fire Chiefs Association.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler

Second: Commissioner Roberts

Carried: Unanimous

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Brooks reported:

- Chief Brooks will be leaving to see family in Tennessee from April 8th through April 17th. The deputy chiefs are out this week and will both be in the office next week.
- Chief Brooks was contacted by the Chair of the Nisqually Board. He said that it had been too long since there had been any formal contact and requesting a meeting to rebuild relationships. There is a meeting set up for April 21st.

- There has been a significant decline in several recurrent addresses. At the next meeting, if acceptable, there will be a presentation from the support services division and on their data.
- At the next meeting, there will be a joint promotional ceremony and have the pinning for the two new assistant chiefs and lieutenant. There was a delay due to supply chain issues in getting their badges and helmets, but it would be good to get them all in at once during the next meeting.
- Commissioner Kirkbride asked about when a call is received for fire or smoke in what turns out to be a homeless camp – what is done in these situations? Chief Brooks responded that, depending on what the situation is, if it is a known area with known risks, the fire service will reach out and request that law enforcement co-respond. Support services is working closely with the mobile outreach team with the City of Lacey Police Department, so they are coordinating with them. There will also be a new rapid response team from Public Works to help co-respond to clean up and mitigate sites. If it is a cooking fire or warming fire, the fire service would not engage to put it out if there is no risk. Law enforcement is also reticent to engage if there is not an actual hazard. Recurrent calls are frequent because people see the smoke over and over again. Commissioner Kirkbride reported that he had seen on the news that Seattle Fire has put out 451 homeless camp fires this year. Chief Brooks reported that a similar percentage number has probably been responded to, although actual extinguishment rates would be lower. Chief Brooks commented that he is not clear what the trigger is for Seattle Fire extinguishing them versus just investigating them. The risks are probably greater in Seattle due to proximity to I-5. Commissioner Kirkbride mentioned his concern of the danger to the community as a result of these fires and is happy to hear that the fire service is at least going to investigate them.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Roberts – All Open Meeting Act is due in April. Chief Brooks responded that the Open Public Meetings Act is a four-year recurring cycle. The Public Records Act training needs to be completed. There is a similar video-based reference. If it is preferable for the Board, they can both be done as an annual recurrence. It needs to be done within 90 days of appointment for a new commissioner, which is why it was done last year for Commissioners Gamble and Kelling. After that, the OPMA is on a four-year cycle. Commissioner Roberts also requested that she be excused from the next meeting due to vacation.

Commissioner Hetzler – Requesting clarification of what the city's role is and what the fire commissioner's role is and what responses look like. There was a situation last week in which there was a bonfire started by a homeless camp right behind her work for which Commissioner Hetzler called 911, and was informed that fire services would not be there unless the police came. The police did not come to the scene. Commissioner Hetzler reported feeling quite frustrated and upset at how this situation was handled. Commissioner Hetzler and a couple of other people asked the people who started the fire to leave and then they put out the fire themselves. Chief Brooks reported that he had heard about this situation

after the fact and that it was reported as more of a smoke scare. It is Chief Brooks' understanding that the mobile outreach team should be responding to these types of situations.

Chief Brooks reported that Chief Almada reached out with the information that the laws regarding emergency response has changed, but now all the policies have to be changed to align with the laws. Amending the policies will likely take until May or June. The City of Lacey has been generally easy to work with. A discussion will be held to determine why Commissioner Hetzler's fire report was handled in the way that it was and why mobile outreach was not dispatched.

Commissioner Kirkbride – Reported some comments from members of the police force about still experiencing limitations in what they can do as far as stopping someone during pursuit, et cetera.

X. CORRESPONDENCE

- None.

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

- None.

XII. REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. In Accordance with RCW 42.30.110(1)(d) to discuss contract negotiations and RCW 42.30.110(1)(f) regarding complaints or charges brought against a public employee.

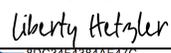
XIII. ADJOURNMENT

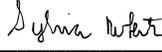
The executive session has concluded. There is no further business before the board. The meeting adjourned as of 6:32 p.m.

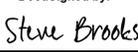
*Next Regular Meeting: April 21, 2022 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.*

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 Chair

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Commissioner
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 ATTEST: District Secretary

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