

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

February 3, 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 Gamble was 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. MEMBER RECOGNITION FOR SERVICE

Board of Fire Commissioners Award is given to Chris DeBell.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the agenda as published.

MOTION: To approve the agenda as amended.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler.

Second: Commissioner Kelling.

Carried: Unanimous

IV. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

V. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Draft minutes of the January 20, 2021, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.

Chair Kirkbride pointed out that a portion of the previous meeting notes will need to be struck from the record. The statement made by the director of Olympic Ambulance, which is stated in the meeting record, "If we go there, we probably will not get reimbursed." All actions referred to in this portion of the meeting notes are referring to the actions of EMS Council and not Lacey Fire. The statement was made by a non-council member, and it should be clarified that it is referring to EMS Council and not to Lacey Fire District 3.

- B. Warrants:

- General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) checks numbered 22964 through 22970 for a total amount of \$64,752.91.
- 2017B Capital Improvement Fund (2019A) 307 checks numbered 22963 in the amount of \$8,021.11
- Red Star Cluster, LLC \$9,810 – behavioral health services.
- Invoice #56141 for \$12,434 for replacement vehicles (32 and 33). This would include outfitting supplies for the two chief officer staff cars that were purchased last year (consoles, lighting equipment, computer mounts).

- C. Payroll 01B in the amount of \$485,508.05

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as amended.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler.
Second: Commissioner Roberts.
Carried: Unanimous

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Thurston County Medic One
EMS Council

Commissioner Kirkbride reported:

- The budget committee for the next fiscal year is starting work on Monday. It should end with the presentation and adoption of a budget in August.
- The next EMS council meeting will be attended by Commissioner Hetzler. At that meeting, there will be several applications for West Region Council membership. The committee has been identifying candidates.

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

Commissioner Roberts reported from the February 2 meeting:

- There were no financial reports at this time; waiting for the end of the year.
- There was an update on the radio system. Still anticipating implementation by midyear of 2023. A different radio for fire service agencies was discussed that is more like a cell phone, but it is very expensive because it also requires a monthly service fee. Chief Brooks clarified that the operations committee voted unanimously to recommend staying with the current hardware. The new hardware is 10% more expensive, and the average estimated annual cost was over \$300 per radio, with hundreds of radios across the county.
- There are a couple of senate bills important to TCOMM, including Senate Bill 555, currently in subcommittee. This would standardize certification for dispatchers and allow dispatchers to have the term replied of "first responder" (currently categorized as secretarial).
- Senate Bill 1703 is also relevant; basically some language clean-up.
- There are still problems with new phone system, Solacom. A letter was sent to Solacom requesting a fix in the system. On the day the letter was sent, a switch failed, which resulted in a total outage. The third level of 911 goes to Spokane and is relayed back via cell, so no calls were dropped, but it was a 3.5 hour outage and the fourth outage since switching to Solacom. Solacom has been on site and is saying that they are working hard on this fix.
- Good news in staffing: there were 13 candidates that went through training. 12 were sent on to the director level. 8 are now currently in the second set of testing, the psychological testing. If able to train all of them, it would bring TCOMM up to full staffing.
- The next meeting is March 2nd.

C. City/District Liaison

Waiting to set a date for the next meeting based on Commissioner Kirkbride's availability. Most likely will be later in the month.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

No report – the next meeting is on February 15th.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

No report – the next meeting is February 4th.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- With the uptick in COVID cases, there has not been a lot of proactive outreach regarding the Senior Safe At Home program. Chris DeBell and other volunteers remain willing and able. Trying to navigate one-off requests for things like smoke detector checks; trying to minimize crews being in homes for other than emergency response. Chris has been doing a lot of car seat checks.
- Chief Brooks was contacted by Jubilee's residents association to come talk in May about the state of the district and some updates.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- Cooperation is going well with TCOMM and the first phase of TCOMM renovations at the Tech were drawing to a close this week. The work was completed just in time for the start of the recruit academy. A server room was built for the computer technology equipment. There have been contractors on site to look at furnishings and installing the equipment. The hope is to be operational in the summer to do some training on site.
- Chief Cerovski has been working with the architects and engineers to coordinate an appropriate location for the backup generator for the two shop buildings. There is an identified location already for an upgraded generator for the tech building and the design hope is to co-locate the two generators in one sound-deadening area.
- There will be three or four roof-mounted antennas but no tower. These will be microwave and digital.
- There was an incident with one of the new engines. One of the high side doors of the engine was up as it went to leave the building and came in contact with a high speed door. There was significant damage. Because of supply chain issues and the level of damage to the rig, parts are needed from Pierce and it could take up to four months to get those parts. The rig cannot remain in service as a front line unit. The shop was able to work on it to make it functional to serve for the recruit academy, so the recruits get to work with a brand new engine missing one door. An insurance claim was filed. The door contractor was out and got the door back in service that day.
- The old Engine 33 that went into reserve has an issue. It was sent to the local freightliner dealership which is the warranty and repair dealer for Detroit Diesel. They did some work on it, but it still had a problem and would not start. They discovered an internal failure, a known issue with the motor. Because it is a known issue, they have redesigned an appropriate fix for it, but because so many are failing across the country, the part will not be available for two to three months. So there are two rigs out of service right now awaiting parts and these could be out of service for two to four months or longer. The 20-year old rig, which was intended to be just a hose wagon and training unit, is now the primary backup again. Engine 35's crew returned to the other backup that had been their previous frontline rig. The ladder truck had gone for some warranty work and came back with everything working well.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. COVID Emergency Declaration status:

There is no change in the declaration status. Thanks to Director Huff for providing statistics related to personnel impacts and corollary costs recovered through FEMA. From July 1st to December 31st of 2021, there were 23 members who had some level of effect from COVID-19, either off on quarantine or positive themselves. The billable backfill total for the 857 hours was about \$60,000, an average of 143 hours per month. Expected to receive 100% reimbursement for those amounts.

From the beginning of the year through January 31st, there have already been 21 members, not including administrative or executive staff, only operations members, affected by COVID-19. The estimated backfill hours of that single month's time of 617 hours for \$43,000. This is an increase of over 300% for the comparable times. Still working to look at the back billing for last month's cycle. In February, there are already 96 hours of backfill. It is plateauing but has been a rough couple of months. There are several agencies who have not instituted the backfill, and if this had come out of the general fund without the ability to backfill, it would have a much larger impact.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Brooks reported:

- Thanks to the commissioners for participating in the planned strategic planning sessions. The information will next be consolidated into usable data.
- There was a significant fire event. Southeast Thurston Regional Fire Authority had a triple fatality fire. In the aftermath of that, two of our investigators supported the investigation.
- There was also a fire event at Kohl's. There was an external recycle bin with an open hole into the structure that filled the entire Kohl's building with smoke. They are likely to lose the majority of their inventory. During this event the new winch on the front of the new ladder truck was used for the first time. They were able to pull the involved dumpster away from the building to limit the damage.
- Chief Cerovski hosted an informational meeting regarding the new Assistant Chief Logistics position. Hoping to have several candidates interested in the position. Letters of interest are due by February 11th. One has been submitted so far.
- There was a meeting today with the other ALS agencies and Medic One staff to align dates for ALS negotiations. There will be a meeting next week to talk about issues of interest going into the negotiations. Medic One requested negotiating as a team rather than negotiating independently with each agency.

- Legislation: the bill that is expected to pass without any significant hurdles is the law enforcement and firefighter's pension bill enhancement. That will not incur any additional cost to the agency or the members. It is funded from the benefit enhancement fund that has been in place for over a decade.
- There were 9 new career firefighter EMTs hired. There is one new paramedic firefighter who came on in the fourth quarter of last year. There are also two members who are currently going through a volunteers through the career academy. One is through the WorkEx program, and another is recently out of the military. All of them have been in orientation this week and will be joined on Monday by 12 additional candidates, 6 from a combination of Southeast Thurston and East Olympia, 4 from McLane Black Lake, and two from the City of Tumwater for a total academy of 24 students. They would be done and ready to start by the 1st of June.
- There is a conflict for the next meeting and for the second meeting of March, so one of the deputy chiefs will be staffing the meeting instead.

X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Roberts – the strategic planning meeting was incredibly well put together. It was three hours long and went so quickly. Thanks to the chief for the kind words at Keith Flewelling's retirement.

Commissioner Kelling – there has been discussion in the past of the annual report for 2021. More important is the review of the data and the analysis behind that. It will likely be wrapped up into the strategic planning process. Statistics were just presented on the second half of the last calendar year and the first part of this calendar year on the impacts of COVID to the members. During a ride-along this week, mandatory overtime was discussed. Interested to hear from that perspective the impacts of COVID and the mandatory overtime and those types of second- and third-order effects on the members of the district.

The chief responded that in regards to the annual report: running into some challenges right now. The record management system is bordering on non-functional due to an issue with the vendor. Hoping to have the report done by the end of the first quarter.

Commissioner Kelling clarified that the concern is more around the data and the analytics to support planning. Looking at capacity with the aid unit out of Station 34: is there a plan to purchase an additional aid vehicle?

Chief Brooks responded that there are three aid units now. We have the ability through the Medic One system to receive surplus medic units when they go into reserve status and get replaced, which is how the three current aid units were acquired. Medic One has a criteria where they rank agencies on who gets those. That would be the first choice of how to get one because it is very cost-effective.

Commissioner Hetzler – How often is there mandatory overtime?

Chief Brooks responded that this year so far there has been five instances so far. The union manages that process but they have a revolving criteria that they use.

Last year, there were a couple paramedics who were mandatoried four or five times.

Has there been anything new about the discussions a few months back that Olympia and Tumwater were having about Regional Fire Authority?

Chief Brooks stated that they have selected a consultant group. The understanding is that they will be meeting every two weeks with the consultants and have identified a committee from each city to include elected officials and staff. They will be meeting biweekly for the foreseeable future with the consultants. One group is more the facilitating group and another is a subject matter expert group. An 18-month process to evaluate is anticipated before coming forward with any recommendations.

Commissioner Hetzler will not be present at the March 17th meeting.

Commissioner Kirkbride – no comments.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

- None

XII. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

- No comments.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:18 PM.

*Next Regular Meeting: February 17th, 2022 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.*

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 ATTEST: District Secretary