

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

July 21, 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 Kirkbride was excused.
Commissioner Kelling joined the meeting via Zoom.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Hetzler called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM, followed with a salute to our Nation's Flag.

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Staff requested an addition to the agenda item under Old Business of the Intergovernmental EMS Contract Amendment Number 2.

MOTION: To approve the agenda as amended.

Motion: Commissioner Gamble
Second: Commissioner Roberts
Carried: Unanimous

III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Draft minutes of the July 7th, 2022, meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting.
- B. Draft minutes of the July 7th, 2022, meeting of the Board of Volunteer Firefighters (BVFF) meeting.
- C. Warrants:
 - General Fund 001 (Acct #6630) EFTs numbered 5078 through 5086 and checks numbered 23157 through 23186 and Draft number 974 for a total amount of \$950,979.96.
 - Capital Projects Fund 301 – EFT number 5004 and check number 23187 for a total amount of \$41,662.97.
 - 2017B Capital Projects Fund 307 – EFT number 5024 and check number 23188 for a total amount of \$49,289.70.
- D. Payroll 7A in the amount of \$1,761,563.95.
- E. Payroll 7B in the amount of \$525,008.25.
- F. Draft 2021 Annual Report.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda as published.

Motion: Commissioner Roberts
Second: Commissioner Gamble
Carried: Unanimous

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

Commissioner Hetzler reported from the July 20th meeting:

- Passed the 2023 amended budget. There was an overall increase of about \$940,000, primarily due to the growing system, inflation, and the proposed ALS contract. That was reported to be sustainable within the budget and planning. It has already been reviewed by the budget committee. The \$940,000 included about a 5.7% increase to the ALS contract.
- There was a presentation about diversion. There had been a presentation to the Thurston County commissioners which had been picked up by The Olympian, which caused a lot of questions and confusion. For this reason they presented the information again. There had been a no-divert trial period for three months, March through June. At the end, all of the agencies came together and decided to continue the no-divert. It did not prove to benefit or help in any way. There were studies on overcrowding that found that diversion does not help in the long run. Chief Brooks clarified that LFD was

aware of and participating in the trial. It was found that the census ended up staying the same, but a lot of extra work was done diverting patients.

- Both AMR and Olympic did a briefing of where they are at with staffing. Both are planning to be fully staffed within a very short period of time.
- Chief Patti of McLane Black Lake did a presentation on the trial of private ambulance utilization/direct dispatch. That trial will begin on August 1st. Chief Schmidt clarified that all of the county agencies ops chiefs met on July 21st and a directive will be going out and disseminated to all of the crews. There was a meeting with Olympic to provide private ambulance support. Fire crews will arrive on scene, confirm that a patient needs and wants to be transported, and then a private ambulance will be called to transport. This will allow the ambulances to be stationary until it is confirmed that they are in fact needed and will hopefully diminish the no-load incidents. After 30 days, LFD will connect with the private ambulance company to get their numbers, and then the county will decide whether to continue with this process. The no-load rate at this time is about 50%. Strokes will be an exception in which ambulances can be called out immediately. Commissioner Kelling queried as to whether Olympia is participation in this trial, and Chief Schmidt clarified that they are, while still looking at their own BLS transport opportunities.
- The citizen at large position discussion was postponed because they are working on a different process to determine that position.
- The BLS transport for Fire District 13 (Griffin) was approved. It will next go to the West Region EMS Council.
- No meeting next month.

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

No report – the July meeting was canceled. The next meeting will be August 3rd.

C. City/District Liaison

No report – the next meeting is August 16th.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

Commissioner Gamble reported from the July 19th meeting:

- Chris Clem from Olympic Ambulance reported on transport challenges for BLS and about the idea of a secure transport for mental health patients who do not require emergent care. This would be a plexiglass van with only one EMS provider required to transport. The reason for these efforts is because in 2020, calls for mental health patients increased by 15%. In 2021, it has gone up 8%. They have found that they are having to drive further to find accepting facilities for mental health patients. This is just getting started, and legislature had approved in 2015 that EMS can transport directly to mental health and chemical dependency centers, which has been difficult in rural communities. Right now, \$100,000 has been set aside to do a study on what the barriers are for transport of these mental health patients. Work is being done to get funding

and legislative backing and getting support for this plan. One ambulance trip for a mental health patient to go to a mental health or chemical dependency location would be the equivalent of two trips with the van because only one driver would be needed. It is thought that an EMT would be needed to staff the van with research being done to determine what training would be needed – expected to be behavioral psych emergency training, much of which is deescalation. If they are in an ambulance and it is a voluntary transport to a facility, that individual can ask to stop the ambulance at any time and get out and not follow through on the transport. By making this process less invasive with no restraints and just a one-on-one situation and by making the patient more comfortable, it is hoped that fewer patients will request to end the transport.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

No report – the next meeting is September 2nd.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- The next upcoming event is the Thurston County Fair. Working on staffing, but with staffing challenges, it is difficult to have a presence there.
- There was a dedicated crew at the barbecue festival, which was very well-attended.
- Engine 35 was out for half a day with 45 children from a local daycare.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- Still pending with the city of Lacey on the vehicle repair facility. There have been delays with the engineering review. Hopeful that will be coming back soon so that it can get out for bid as soon as possible.
- All of the parts arrived for Engine 35 at the body shop up in Kent. They are underway and are estimating a two- to three-week repair time.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. COVID Emergency Declaration Status: Staff Report

There has been an uptick in positive cases among either members or family, requiring quarantine. There have been no cases of significant illness and no hospitalizations. Have been assisting Olympia with staffing as necessary as they are also having difficulty with staffing issues. Continuing to bill at the 90% level as Director Huff previously reported.

B. EMS contract revision amendment:

Chief Brooks had previously brought a draft amendment that Medic One had asked that would basically eliminate part of their liability for the lease with Medic

Two. That was not acceptable to the commissioners. After more staff work and discussion, they offered this revision, which does allow billing at an amount not to exceed \$45,000. This was done before the negotiated amount for this year, so there was a slight CPI increase on that. This will still leave a gap of about \$1,000, which is better than expected. The total bill was just over \$46,000. They also allowed for continuing billing for the balance of this year for the utilities. Staff recommends acceptance of this. Chief Cerovski and Chief Frost and Chief Brooks went out and met with the landlords, the Longnecker family, who owns J&I to talk about what happens because the current lease is up at the end of the year. Medic One has expressed some interest in pursuing something different with concerns about the cost, but they don't have a good alternative at this time. J&I has expressed a willingness to extend the lease for an additional year at 3% CPI which is much lower than the actual CPI. That was turned over to Medic One, who has not yet gotten back on their plans. If it is extended, the lessee role would be transferred from the district over to Medic One.

MOTION: To approve the intergovernmental EMS contract with Lacey Fire District 3, Amendment Number 2. The contract amendment is made and entered between Thurston County and Lacey Fire District 3.

Motion: Commissioner Roberts
Second: Commissioner Kelling
Carried: Unanimous

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2021 Annual Report: Presentation and Board Action

- Did change the information relative to things reported in the past like turnout times and travel times. Not including Medic Two separately since it is not serving our district.
- Commissioner Roberts commented regarding being given permission to not wear masks at some point last year. When firefighters are in close proximity, it is usually outside, which is fine under the current guidance. Chief Brooks echoed that the pictures shown were outdoors and are therefore acceptable.
- The commissioners all expressed gratitude for the presentation of the report and the pictures included.

MOTION: To approve the approve the annual report.

Motion: Commissioner Gamble
Second: Commissioner Roberts
Carried: Unanimous

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Brooks reported:

- Participated in a press conference on behalf of the state chiefs at a forum of about 100 interested parties, hosted by the Washington State Hospital Association. It was relative to the challenges of hospital capacity. One of the biggest issues or challenges is the inability to discharge to skilled nursing or other facilities. There is also an issue of staffing rather than bed availability. In some locations there are over 50 beds available but no staff for them. There was also an element regarding Washington being the only state in the nation with a unique guardianship rule. Without a specific power of attorney allowing for it, immediate family members cannot expressly affirm or commit the patient to skilled nursing or assisted living without the guardianship and there are hundreds of patients right now inpatient who cannot be discharged because of this guardianship rule. Patients can have life support ended or have surgery, but they cannot be sent to skilled nursing. There was a request to the legislature to fix that. Chief Brooks talked about the impacts to the EMS system, including that there are offload times of greater than four hours, during which time those units are missing 911 calls.
- Hopeful that the swearing in and pinning for the new members, including two lateral paramedic hires, will be done at the first August meeting.
- Conditional offers are out to two additional paramedics, which would be four total paramedic new hires to be sent to academy in September.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kelling – appreciation to the chief on the delivery of the amendment to the intergovernmental EMS contract. It was very easy to understand. Happy to hear that the community engagement is up. Congratulations on potential for new paramedic hires. Request for clarification on building the additional aid vehicle and confirm its stationing plan.

Chief Brooks responded: Aid 33 at the Mullen Road Station has been in place since 2017. It was staffed fully in 2019. The plan right now is with the 12 people just brought out of academy in June, they are going through initial training at the company level, and beginning on or about September 1st, the second aid car will be brought up as a part of regular staffing out at Station 34. It is on the road about one-third of the time right now because there is enough staffing with the new hires, even though they are not riding on it by themselves. One of the aid units by itself ran 16 calls, and their engine company ran an additional 10 or 12 this week. Without that aid unit, it would have been a huge impact to having crews cross-cover out of station areas. For Aid 34, the hope is that it will come online on or about September 1st. As far as the actual vehicles, that vehicle is already out there, but that is the one seeking a bid for re-chassis. Chief Frost and Chief Cerovski have been seeking bids and proposals for taking the box off the back of it and putting it onto a new chassis, and they are waiting to finalize those bids. Hearing that even with those bids in, it is probably 10-12 months to get the chassis that is necessary based on supply chain issues right now. There is a third unit, the bariatric unit, that can be run in the interim and serves as the spare. It is designated as Aid Unit 31. It is living at 34 because of all of the current space

constraints. So there are a total of three aid units; looking to getting one of them re-chassis. Aid 33 was re-chassis in 2019. Also, on the list to receive an additional aid unit, but will not know where the standing is on the ranked order because there is a triage criteria used. This would provide a fourth unit. Chief Brooks' goal is to have three aid unit staffed, one at 31, and having the fourth one would give a reserve unit.

Commissioner Kelling added that as of July 16th, the new 988 suicide and crisis line did go into effect.

Commissioner Gamble – Will not be present at the first August meeting.

Commissioner Hetzler – No comments, but would like to hear more about the 988 suicide and crisis line.

Commissioner Roberts – No comments.

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 meeting adjourned as of 6:25 PM.

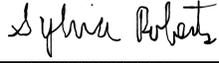
*Next Regular Meeting: August 4th, 2022 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.*

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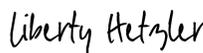

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Chair

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