

**THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE**

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**January 20, 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.

**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:** To approve the agenda as amended.

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler  
Second: Commissioner Kelling  
Carried: Unanimous

**III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC /MEMBERS PRESENT**

None.

**IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

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

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

Motion: Commissioner Hetzler  
Second: Commissioner Kirkbride  
Carried: Unanimous

Questions: We have a \$1204.80 payment to the Oregon Department of Justice. Is that a child support garnishment?

Chief Brooks: Yes. We have worked to try to clarify some of those, and that's just the way the payroll system pushes it out. That's not a district direct expense. It is an expense on behalf of a member.

## V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Thurston County Medic One

#### EMS Council

Commissioner Kirkbride reported from the January 19 meeting:

- We had to deal with renewal of ambulance licenses. Chris Clem gave a report of what they are doing to try to overcome staffing shortages. They have started an internship system program across the company. The first new intern for Lacey started today. They pay them full salary, which is \$53,000 a year, and pay for their education and certification to become EMTs. So they are on salary, and then they go to school and get licenses. They can do ride-alongs, as well. They are focusing on JBLM and military that is retiring or leaving service and do not have a job. They can walk right into the job. There is no gap where they have to go get the schooling and then get a job. They posted that they were doing this, and within one week, they had 200 applicants.
- There was a nominating committee formed for the chair and vice chair. Paul Perz and Dr. Sheila Fay are that committee.
- They appointed a committee for ALS contract negotiations, which needs to happen this year, consisting of Cindy Hambly, John Ricks, Lenny Greenstein, and Stan Moon.
- There was discussion about the licensure of the ambulances. One of them is Falck, and they are only doing inter-facility transports, essentially just for MultiCare. They had applied several years ago to do this when MultiCare announced they were going to be building clinics in Thurston County. They would transport at that point from the clinics to the hospital in Tacoma. Because MultiCare wasn't here, there was no local address, and they could not get licensed and get the authority to do that. Now MultiCare is here so the action can be taken to approve their application. AMR and Olympic charge essentially the same rate, \$1250 base rate plus mileage. Falck charges \$2300, which is significantly more, leading to the question why. Medic One does not have any authority on regulation of the charges, but we asked for rates for the package for re-licensure. There was a lot of discussion about this.
- Regarding BLS funding worksheet: in the budget, the bulk of the money goes to the ALS contractors. But every agency in the county gets some BLS money because the basic philosophy is that the system cannot function without local agencies' responders. So we provide them some money.

Historically, we have given them lump sum, which this year is \$20,000. Then whatever the council allocates, that is divided by the calls that the agencies went on last year, which gives a per-call price. That is distributed to the agencies. One of the things done in the budget last year, which we had to do before the vote, is adopt two budgets, one with a negative vote and one with a positive vote. The one with the positive vote added \$250,000 to BLS. The negative vote would have ultimately taken money away. So we have added \$250,000, and they told us where that went. There is another \$50,000 that was added, for a total of \$300,000. They did not change the formulas. Lacey Fire gets a direct payment -- this is the \$20,000 plus call volume, \$126,000. Then the rest of it, we do not get to see. Out of this budget comes the money for supplies and training and all those kinds of things, but the ultimate total on the budget is \$598,995, which is 22.22% of the total BLS bucket. That is Lacey's allocated share. They put in \$108,000, which will impact us positively, to pay for cellular service for the modems in the rigs. They supply the modems, and as I understand it, the agencies are then paying for the cell service. Medic One is now going to pick up and pay for the cell service for all the agencies for all the modems, so whatever the cell costs are for that will be a savings.

- MultiCare has proposed an emergency medical center along Golf Club Road at Pacific. To have a medical facility, you have to get a conditional use permit, which is similar to the special use permit that we had to get for our station on Steilacoom Road. That process is underway right now. We were asked for a letter of support to the city for the application, which based on what I knew, was not really necessary because the staff report came out a month ago, and the staff report obviously supports the project because they have already started their exploration work and fenced it off. There is pretty good evidence that MultiCare believes they are going to get approved. Ultimately, Lacey Fire needs more information. Four or five other members of the council jumped in with the same question. What is this and how do we support it? It is an emergency care facility with no beds, so patients will be transported out. The patients can walk in or via AMR or Olympic.
- The next meeting is in one month.

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

No report – the next meeting is February 2nd.

C. City/District Liaison

No report – the meeting was cancelled this week.

The city proposed to go back to the original calendar, which would be February 15th. This is pending the new chair and vice chair appointments.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

Commissioner Hetzler reported from the meeting:

- They would appreciate if we all would participate in a legislative session update webinar. It is on January 27th at 7:00 p.m. There will be updates about the bills that WFCOA and the state chiefs are working on during this short session.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

Commissioner Kelling reported from the Month Date meeting:

- The council approved the 2022 operating budget. No highlights. As other commissions and boards, they are going through chair and vice chair nominations. There is some turnover with new members, which has not quite settled down yet.
- The council approved the final versions of the vision, mission, and value statements.
- Depending on the final census numbers, this area may become a federally designated transportation management area, which is population dependent, but requires the establishment of a couple of additional committees and reporting requirements.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Brooks shared:

- There is a lull of invitations into homes right now. The Senior Safe At Home has not had any active invitations so far, but there is one lined up for February. They took the proactive step of fit testing all the Senior Safe At Home administrators who go into homes for N95 masks. They continue to be willing to go in if invited.
- The Boys and Girls Clubs of Thurston County has a nomination of Youth of the Year from each club. Those five then compete for the Thurston County Youth of the Year. The True Responders charity take the five youth and go to Kohl's and get them appropriate attire for making a presentation. On February 1st they have their first round of speaking engagements. The final event when the winner is chosen is February 6th. The age range for the kids is 14 to 18. Each of the club winners gets a scholarship, and then the final winner gets a larger scholarship through South Puget Sound Community College. Chief Brooks participated in the shopping event.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Brooks shared:

- We were preparing for the secondary pre-submission with the City of Lacey now that we have been annexed in for the vehicle repair facility. One of the big things we were looking for was a potential variance to some of the energy code rules because of this being a garage and shop. Chief Cerovski presented that information, and we did not get any pushback on that being a valid concept. The architects and engineers are back and forth with the city on trying to finalize their questions, but there are no obvious or apparent hurdles

that should delay the project. We are hopeful to move it forward and start doing the submissions and work on final drawings.

- Warranty work: our new ladder truck had to go back north for a couple of things. It is still up in Tacoma for minor repairs. Both of the new engines have remained in service with no major issues with either of those.
- Continuing work in the background with the planning for the Station 33 expansion. The vehicle exhaust system is now in service at both Station 33 and 35. The install at Station 31 will hopefully be nearing completion by the next meeting.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. COVID update:**

- We saw a significant spike with over a dozen members impacted through either a positive test or being symptomatic. The number has fallen and the majority are back in the workplace. There are still occasional symptomatic folks getting tested. In our partnership with Medic One, we were able to obtain 100 tests in house, so when outside testing is unable, Chief Flowers has been able to administer tests to both members and potentially symptomatic family members to help with more predictive return to work.
- We had our first inquiry last week from a citizen asking about our accommodations procedure and the continued employment of unvaccinated members. We were able to meet with the citizen who had some questions and provided follow up documentation. He was appreciative of that information and was going to take it back to his social network.
- Chair Roberts thanked everyone for their support during her time as chair.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Appointment of Board Chair and Vice Chair for 2022.**

- Everyone should have received the policy regarding selection of Board Chair and Vice Chair. The chair is a rotating service based upon the position that you were elected to. It is Commissioner Kirkbride's turn to be the chair, and he accepted this position.
- Commissioner Kirkbride complimented and thanked Chair Roberts for her role as chair for the past year.
- Commissioner Hetzler was nominated for the vice chair position and agrees to serve in this role if elected. The motion was carried unanimously.

### **B. Appointments of committee assignments.**

- Everyone received the current 2021 board committee assignments. Commissioner Hetzler would be willing to resign the Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association. Commissioner Gamble will move to this role. The first alternate will be Commissioner Hetzler. The new representative for the City/District Liaison role will be Commissioner Kirkbride and Commissioner Hetzler along with Chief Brooks. For Thurston Regional

Planning Council, the representative will continue to be Commissioner Kelling with Commissioner Roberts as an alternate. Chief Cerovski will take over as the staff alternate. The appellate panel for district members will not change.

**MOTION:** To accept the above discussed committee appointments.

Motion: Commissioner Kelling  
Second: Commissioner Roberts  
Carried: Unanimous

## **VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

- Good feedback from community members about service provided. One crew had a reach-out from a former patient from November. This was notable because it is not often that the crews hear directly from the patient. This patient had been in the hospital with cardiac troubles and then returned home. He had symptoms and called the crews out but was hesitant to go back to the hospital. The crews talked to him about going in, and he had 100% blockage in one of his arteries that had not been addressed at his previous stay. He was very grateful, and it was nice for the crews to hear directly from him.
- The last time the Board met was before the flooding. We got a huge thank you from Chief Smith from West Thurston thanking us for having crews in their station helping with their response. There were about 10 call-outs in the times that our crews were there, one of which was especially critical. The gentleman that we helped would have passed away had we not been there.
- In South Bay, we were called because a pregnant woman and her husband were stuck at their home. She was in active labor but they were not able to leave their home because of the flood conditions. Our crews went out with a raft and got them safely to where they could get an ambulance to the hospital.
- There was an event for Capital Metro Women In Fire, a collaborative group with Olympia, Tumwater, and Lacey, to talk about future girls' camps and setting up support and/or mentoring in the county. There were about 10 representatives there from Lacey.
- There was an email sent earlier today about logo wear. Normally, logo wear would be embroidered with the name, but if the preference is to use a badge instead, that would also be fine. It was agreed to have the names embroidered on the logo wear. The Department of Corrections Industry Group will be fulfilling the order.
- Chief Brooks shared about expansion of uniform allotments to administrative personnel. There has been a uniform system and requirement for the operations personnel, but there was talk about an adjusted practice to have logo wear and required uniform attire for the administrative personnel, especially those that are in direct contact with the public. Chief Cerovski has been working on this, including extending this process for the board for access to similar items, as well. Operations attire is required to be flame-retardant, so the attire for the board will

be lower cost, but there will be set in the policy a level of uniform allotment for non-operations personnel.

- Chief Cerovski did engage with Foster Garvey, our legal counsel, regarding the questions on the easement and storm water runoff at Station 34. We have engaged alternative counsel. Once we have something, we will formally discuss it at a subsequent meeting. Chief Cerovski put out a reminder today.
- Chief Brooks is continuing this session as a chair of the legislative committee for the state chiefs and has testified on three separate bills. There was a narrow legislative agenda with a couple of proactive things. There are some pretty aggressive attempts to refine or correct some of the unanticipated consequences of the law enforcement reform from last session. There were four separate bills, three of which were technical corrections. One of them in particular addresses our concerns with law enforcement's perceived restriction of the ability to help other first responders. That had no opposition and was very well-received. They broke out the bills into different segments. There were a couple of other ones related to things like use of force that do have quite a bit of concern still related to them, but we believe that this one about the corrections that would provide clarity for law enforcement and their ability to support our responders is likely not to face opposition. It does have an emergency provision so that once it was ratified, it would be immediately in effect.
- There are some others that we are watching related to some Department of Health things like making the ability for our responders to do vaccinations, like they are able to do currently under emergency authorization, to be permanent so that that would not be a restriction.
- There are some other ones technical to funding, particularly for cities, and that is one that just came up late. The city of Everett is trying to sponsor one where the fire benefit charge, which is an alternative funding mechanism that has historically only been available to districts and RFAs could become available to cities. There are technical concerns there because the offsets that are required of districts and RFAs does not work in the city environment, so they are still looking at that one and potentially some technical corrections.
- Another big one is a collaboration with Labor for substantial enhancements to the Law Enforcement and Fire Fighters Pension System Plan 2, which is the one that all of our active members are registered in. There has been a benefit enhancement account that has been established for well over a decade, and it is well funded. We are the best funded public pension system in the nation by far. Currently the LEOFF 2 system is funded at an estimated 145% of liabilities. Even with this benefit enhancement, which would basically increase the multiplier for law enforcement and firefighters in the ten-year period between years 15 and 25, it takes what is currently a 2% multiplier and moves it to a 2.5% multiplier, which is a net of a 5% increase on the pension at that 25-year mark. So it is a pretty substantial benefit enhancement, but it does not at all jeopardize the solvency and the fiscal health of the program. The current estimates are that it would take it from 145% down to 130% of full funding. It also does some things that puts the LEOFF system on parity with other pension systems. It makes a minimum

benefit requirement, which there is currently not for the LEOFF system, even though the board historically has made minimum requirements of contribution. This would codify that, that there has to be a minimal contribution at all times.

- There is a co-responder bill in the realm of mental health, trying to provide training and better guidance for co-responder programs, similar to what the City of Lacey and the City of Olympia are doing with mobile outreach teams or community resource units. It would codify that and provide required training for those co-responder teams.
- These are the ones that we're working the state council or the commissioners on, mainly in either a monitor or proactive role. We are not playing a lot of defense on issues that we're concerned about with negative impact, which has been refreshing.
- We are about to initiate the first element of our strategic planning process on January 24th—27th and 31st with our support services teams, including Director Gorman and Jordan Richardson. They have a unique background and skill set to facilitate this process. They will be hosting these four sessions, one on each shift. We have asked the administrative personnel to spread themselves out across the four days. An invitation is extended to the commissioners. Please communicate regarding which day you can attend so that it can be planned accordingly.

## **IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Roberts – Checking that everyone received the information about Keith Flewelling's retirement. Commissioner Roberts will sign a card for his retirement from the Board of Commissioners. Is there any thought to rescheduling the retirement for the people who could not come because of snow?

Chief Brooks responded that the event was pared down. There was a small staff lunch event. There will be no opportunity to reschedule any other event.

Commissioner Gamble – Will not be present for the first meeting in March. Will do the training on January 31st. Thanks to all the members for working hard while understaffed with people out sick and under quarantine.

Commissioner Kelling – Flexible on days, but for strategic planning, the 31st works best.

Commissioner Hetzler – Thanks to Sylvia for her leadership over the past year. Unable to attend the strategic planning sessions.

Commissioner Kirkbride – Not available February 11th through the 20th and therefore unable to attend the very first City/District meeting under the new administration, so that will need to be moved to the 8th or the 22nd. Also unable to attend the fire commissioner meeting on the 17th, which will be chaired by the vice chair. Also unable to attend the EMS council meeting on the 16th. A comment on the chief's statement that he is continuing as the state fire chiefs' legislative liaison: I fully support that, having heard testimony before committees. Thanks to Chief Brooks for continuing that job.

**X. CORRESPONDENCE**

- No additional correspondence.

**XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT**

- None.

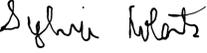
**XII. REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**

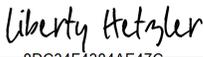
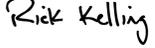
- A. In accordance with RCW 42.30.110(1) (g) to discuss the performance of a public employee. This will take about ten minutes. There will be no action. We are in an executive session at 6:18 p.m.
- B. Executive session completed and back in regular session. We did extend the executive session by about 5 minutes for a total of 15 minutes.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned as of 6:36 PM.

*Next Regular Meeting: February 3, 2022 – 5:30 p.m.  
Available via remote meeting.*

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 ATTEST: District Secretary