

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

March 17, 2022

Commissioner Kirkbride
Commissioner Gamble
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 Hetzler 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. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the agenda as published.

MOTION: To approve the agenda as amended.

Motion: Commissioner Kelling
Second: Commissioner Roberts
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 Gamble
Second: Commissioner Kelling.
Carried: Unanimous

A question regarding an HR temp and Robert Half International was raised. Chief Cerovski clarified that it is the temporary agency that is employed for an HR generalist. Mark works in the office. In the absence of one member of staff on leave, that person is filling in to help Director Perrine.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Thurston County Medic One

Commissioner Kirkbride reported from the March 16 meeting:

- A bylaw change will be entertained that will have the vice president, chairman, and vice president elected every two years instead of every one year.
- Three candidates were raised to the West Regional EMS Council. Those candidates have been accepted by the Department of Health and are now placed on the Council. Another application will be forwarded on to West Region as well for an ER nurse at St. Peter ER. There are two other candidates in discussions to possibly join as well, which would give Thurston County a majority in the West Region.
- There was information about a change in the OTEP evaluative process. This is where annually the EMTs are tested as to their proficiency and knowledge. That has been managed and handled out of Medic One. They now have modified that; it is now delegated to the districts and the departments to be handled on their schedules. The MPD has approved it for 2022 and it will then be decided if this will be a permanent solution.
- The three hospitals, St. Peter, Capital, and Providence Centralia, have gotten together and made a proposal to eliminate the diversion process and to go back to operating as they did several years ago. This will be a trial for 3 months, and they are 10 days into it so far. The call volume is down, so it not yet known what will happen. Commissioner Kirkbride commented that all of the problems that caused the diversion to happen were not solved by the round robin solution, but now going back to the original operational plan that caused the problem to begin with. Under the original operational plan, St. Peter Hospital takes most of the candidates in the north county. In the south county, most go to Centralia because it is closer. There is more capability at St. Peter and a much bigger ER than at Capital. If the patient meets the criteria that Capital can take care of them, and theoretically if they are on the west side, then the patient will go to Capital. Because of staffing challenges, patients would go to the ER at St. Peter and would be cared for but bedded in the hallways. Wait times in the ambulances were sometimes up to three or four hours outside of the ER. The ambulance companies started going to Pierce

County when they couldn't get the patients into St. Peter. Pierce County then said Thurston County patients would not be accepted. This is when the round robin system was initiated, with BLS patients being diverted to Capital or Centralia when St. Peter is full. Now will be going back to waiting in the parking lot at St. Peter rather than diverting to Capital or Centralia. There is also an effort to get Madigan to accept non-military patients but this has not been successful yet. Madigan does not have the same staffing problem as the civilian hospitals, but the discussions have not yielded solutions at Madigan.

- The budget committee met on March 15th regarding analysis of whether there is enough money to get through the year due to the cost of doing business at CPI, et cetera, particularly with fuel. Historically, it costs about \$0.75 per mile per vehicle for fuel. It is up to \$1.25 now. A budget amendment is needed to pay the bills. The county commissioners have set a date in April to look at all budget amendments from all departments including Medic One. Medic One added \$750,000 to the budget. For 2022, the three contracts are \$9,750,000, and with this, that part of the budget will be \$10,500,000, or 7.7% increase for the ALS contracts, but it is only a little over a 4% increase to the overall budget.

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

No report – the next meeting is April 6th.

C. City/District Liaison

No report – the next meeting is April 19th.

- At that meeting, one item of discussion will be the review that will be received from the attorney.

D. Thurston County Fire Commissioners Association

Commissioner Gamble reported from the latest meeting:

- The majority of time was spent on a presentation from Scott Haley from the Department of Revenue going over the updates on financial disclosure.
- They finalized a letter of support for the WFCA Healthcare Committee openings. They had two individuals, Dr. Guy Earle and Dr. Leonard Albert, who the commissioners are endorsing. There was a formal letter sent.
- There was a discussion of Senate Bill 555 regarding public safety officer being classified as a first responder and how important this is to standardize training.

E. Thurston Regional Planning Council -

Commissioner Kelling reported from the last meeting:

- There was a cost of living index update. Data is provided every three months, but this is an annual update. Right now, the cost of living in the

Olympia/Lacey/Tumwater region is 110.3, which means out of 267 urban areas that take part in this study every year, that the Olympia/Lacey/Tumwater region is 10.3% higher in its cost of living over a number of factors. This is public information on the TRPC website and is updated every year.

- The economic development representatives from Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and the county all presented plans or status updates on housing attainability and their housing action plans. A lot of the data was very similar to the city manager's presentation as far as the city of Lacey goes. Average rents have been going up for the last two decades. Median home sale prices have been going up. The percentage and numbers of cost-burdened households also has been going up, as has the median income of households or the average households. The majority of it goes back to the difference in density between multifamily developments and single-family homes, which is in sharp contrast especially in the city of Lacey.
- There was also an update on smart corridor and traffic signal priorities. The presentation will be sent to Chief Brooks to share. They are in the project development phase of the operation. There is a specific corridor along Martin Way which involves 27 traffic signals for the city of Lacey, but they are in concept development. Intercity Transit is the lead governmental agency. TRPC is providing coordinating authority. They are also forming a technical working group, which is supposed to have an EMS representative and from the city liaison, potentially the County Fire Commissioner Association. Unsure who this person might be. There may be some efficiencies gained by cooperation between all the cities that are participating from the county, and to make sure that whatever technology is employed is compatible.

F. Community Outreach

Chief Cerovski shared:

- The community outreach coordinator, Chris DeBell, reported that there has been five additional Senior Safe At Home assessments. Chris is working on a Department of Health grant for some grab bars in conjunction with the Rebuilding Together Thurston County.
- There are plans coming together for a joint Lacey Fire District 3 and American Red Cross home smoke alarm installation at Alonda Village Mobile Home Park. That will be on May 7th.
- Chris DeBell is also working on a launch of the inflatable fire escape house on June 4th at the Rotary Duck Dash.
- There is also a request for presence at community events that are coming in, including the Lacey Fun Fair, the Chamber Barbecue Festival.
- Yesterday Chris DeBell and Chief Schmidt attended JBLM's job fair.

G. Capital Facilities and Equipment Activities

Chief Cerovski shared:

- There are no significant updates on the vehicle repair facility expansion, although getting closer to the June target of accepting bidders for contractors. Getting ready to submit those documents for review for building permits in the next month.
- Engine 35 had some damage along with Station 35's overhead door. The repair equipment is in to repair the door and should be going into place in the next three weeks or so. A repair plan is in process for development with some local vendors. There was an option for the vehicle to go all the way back to Wisconsin, but that has been ruled out. Hopefully at the next meeting there will be a firm update.
- There was a request to do some research on a solar grant that is about ready to come due through Washington State. There is some preliminary information on that. The grant is about \$325,000 of which there would be a 50% match, meaning that \$173,000 would be needed for just one facility. Station 31 was chosen as a sample to get some data for the board. The return on investment from that solar energy into the building would be between 10 and 20 years, depending on how much solar efficiency there is from the panels, and it is too early to get a firm number on that, but it does give an idea of what the outlay would be against the return on that investment. This is not something that has been budgeted for and would need to be planned for if it is a serious intention going forward. There are some benefits to the state grant. It looks like a pretty organized system, but there are a lot of requirements, financial and otherwise, that would need to be planned for.
- Commissioner Kirkbride commented that in the northern part of the United States and especially western Washington and Oregon, they are considered not cost effective. There are a variety of fire podcasts and blogs, et cetera, that mention the challenge of needing to vent the building with the solar panels and the danger that you do not know where the power connections are under the roof. If you have a house with solar panels, then you do horizontal ventilation, not vertical. Commissioner Kirkbride considers this good incentive to not put up solar panels. The panels are getting better and cheaper all the time, so maybe this would be a consideration for next year. It is a major focus of the legislature and the state, and more and more grant money will likely go towards this, but maybe it should wait until it is most cost effective.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- A. COVID Emergency Declaration Status: there are changes to staff requirements for masking. There is one member that will be returning as a result in the changed requirements for masking.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. None.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Cerovski reported:

- Counselor Gillespie will reach out from Foster Garvey to provide some information and will have a report before next meeting.
- Lieutenant Chris Frost will be promoted to the Assistant Chief of Logistics. His start date is April 4th, 2022.
- One of the paramedics is being promoted to lieutenant, Bill Collins. His start date will be in the beginning of April.
- Targeting a promotional ceremony for the second meeting in April for a number of people involved in this process.

Chief Schmidt reported:

- Recently went through an interview process for career development. There are several positions, including dive team, rescue swimmers, and also sort team members. There were positions that had been vacant for some time but also members that had vacated. Members put in for all of them, and positions were awarded to several people, so it was a good opportunity for career development.
- At the academy, there is great feedback from the instructors with all of the recruits. There are 10 career and 2 volunteer recruits, in addition to 12 outside members from different agencies. There is great feedback about the quality of training.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Roberts: It is time to submit annual reports again, so make sure to do that.

Commissioner Gamble – No comments, but looking forward to community events this summer.

Commissioner Kelling – What is the historical pass rate for the firefighters in the academy?

Chief Schmidt responded that the previous academy had a pass rate of 100%, but it is a little bit different with each academy, and the numbers have changed with the state academy and with Bates. Fire academies have transitioned to adult learning in the way that they try to engage with the recruits.

Commissioner Kirkbride – Historically for Thurston County academies, the graduates always did exceptionally well. Everyone received from the association a memo from Brian Snure on impacts of fire service employees and volunteers. The masking requirements are no longer required. At the last city council meeting in Lacey, they were maskless. It is still recommended to use a hybrid method to allow members and visitors to attend the meetings via Zoom or Teams, so this will be continued.

Steve Gillespie with Foster Garvey was retained to look at the two issues that had been identified with Station 34. He has been doing his due diligence and has

interviewed the civil engineer and Commissioner Kirkbride. He will be providing his analysis and recommendations for consideration at the first April meeting. One of the reasons for that is talking about the easement necessary for the pond. The easement would be granted to the City of Lacey, so he suggested that it would be a good topic for meeting with the city manager and mayor to address the issues and problems, and his analysis will be available to do that. This will be on the agenda for the April 19th meeting with the city.

X. CORRESPONDENCE

- A thank you from Senior Safe At Home.

XI. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC / MEMBERS PRESENT

- None.

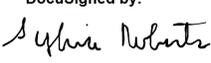
XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned as of 6:02 PM.

*Next Regular Meeting: March 31st, 2022 – 5:30 p.m.
Available via remote meeting.*

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Chair

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Commissioner

Commissioner

Vice Chair

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ATTEST: District Secretary