

THURSTON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT THREE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

January 8, 2009

I. CALL TO ORDER, FLAG SALUTE: 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Chairman Kirkbride
Vice Chairman Houser
Commissioner Christiansen

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION: To approve the agenda as written.

Motion: Vice Chairman Houser

Second: Commissioner Christiansen

Vote: Unanimous

III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC/MEMBERS PRESENT

Bill Gray, resident of Beachcrest Community addressed the Board with the following concerns:

- Why did Station 35 close?
- How is it that the District has two failed levies? What was done to pass the levies?
- With the station closure, homeowners' insurance rates have nearly doubled.
- How much more will I need to pay in order for Station 35 to remain open? I'm already paying \$230 per year.
- He received a personal phone call prior to the last levy urging a "No" vote because of the 17% pay increase for fire fighters. Doesn't remember receiving any information from the District, other than the voters' pamphlet, urging a "Yes" vote.
- Increased response time will mean loss of property and possibly loss of life, citing a previous fire where there was a 12-minute response and all the fire fighters could do was to protect neighboring houses while simply allowing the engulfed house to burn to the ground.
- The District has built three new stations in recent years; was their no plan to staff them?

Richard Leckins, also a resident of Beachcrest, expressed he feels they are being treated like second class citizens. He asked why Station 35; what went into making that decision?

Commissioner Kirkbride addressed their concerns as follows:

- The primary costs for running a fire district are for skilled fire fighters. Lacey Fire District operates on a very slim budget and approved a 17% pay increase simply to bring their salary up to the average fire fighter salary among our comparable jurisdictions.
- In both levies, the District asked for minimal increases – much less than the cost of increased insurance costs – but both failed.
- The decision to close Station 35 was based on the number of responses per year from each station. The station on Willamette had an average of 400 calls per year versus the next highest station, which had 800 calls per year.
- Response time to Beachcrest will only be slightly longer from the station on Steilacoom because of the route to Meridian from Willamette.
- Additional funding for Lacey Fire District could come from voters or from other sources, for example, the City of Lacey. We are meeting with them regularly.

Bill Gray followed up with a statement that more information needed to be provided to citizens. If he had known his insurance costs would go up so dramatically, he would have voted yes.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion: Vice Chairman Houser

Second: Commissioner Christiansen

Vote: Unanimous

- A. Minutes of the December 18, 2008 regular meeting and the December 29, 2008 special meeting.
- B. General Fund warrant vouchers #8799 through #8849 in the amount of \$46,332.78.
- C. Payroll 12B in the amount of \$480,223.65.

Clarification was provided regarding two warrant vouchers.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. EMS - MEDIC ONE

No report.

B. CAPCOM

No meeting was held due to lack of agenda. The next meeting is scheduled for the first Wednesday of February.

C. THURSTON COUNTY FIRE COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

No report on a meeting; however, the following information was provided:

- An invoice for 2009 WFCA dues was received in the amount of \$3,100. The Board will vote on approval at the next meeting.
- Information was distributed regarding compensation for fire district volunteers.
- Mark your calendars for March 9, 2009 – Legislative Day

D. DISTRICT/CITY LIAISON

To be covered under Old Business.

E. THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

No report.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Kirkbride reported on the meeting with the City of Lacey held January 5, 2009, which included the following agenda items:

1. Staffing Station 35.
2. Joint letter to the Olympian.
3. Work plan for 2009.

Chairman Kirkbride distributed a suggested staffing matrix combining Chief Broman's plan, following the Board's previous direction to close Station 35, and the City's plan, which includes providing staffing 80% of the time to Station 35. He further explained that the real issue for the City dates back to 2005 when they believe they approved funding to the District for four additional fire fighters specifically to staff Station 35. Though there was no direct contract to this effect, they feel the District deviated from the spirit of their agreement and used the money to staff the new ladder truck. Now, there are no resources available to continue to staff Station 35. The City does support use of the ladder truck but their recollection is discussions about staffing it would not be until 2008 and that the District moved ahead without these discussions taking place. They did qualify their statements indicating the City does not want to tell the District how to run their program.

At this time, the commitment received from the City is to begin working on a plan to review and consider renewal of our contract with them for 2011.

With some minor revisions, the City approved the draft joint letter to the Olympian. It will be sent this week.

Chairman Kirkbride believes this step with the City reflects an acknowledgement from them that recognizes the need for substantially more funding from the City in order to continue to receive Lacey Fire District services.

Vice Chairman Houser stated he would like to hear directly from Chief Broman about the operational, tactical, safety and morale issues that surround the over-time proposed in the Station 35 staffing matrix.

Commissioner Christiansen said he believes the issue is not a staffing issue – we have enough staff – it is a money issue. We do not have the resources to pay for minimum staffing of Station 35.

A motion was tabled. A meeting will be held next week to hear from Chief Broman on the subject before any action will be taken.

Chairman Kirkbride asked the Board to consider a motion approving over-time pay to temporarily staff Station 35 over the next week, until the issue is settled.

Vice Chairman Houser made an alternative suggestion. Return to the City with a favorable response to the idea but explain that we want to make a decision the right way.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. Assistant Chief Gary Pearson reported that Puget Sound Energy would be able to convert our monthly expense to a budget plan, stabilizing our monthly payments, if we desire. It is preferable not to do this though since it is more difficult to track actual usage on a month-to-month basis.

B. Pearson distributed information regarding possible changes to our lease of former Station 33 on Mullen Road SE with Crown Castle for a cell tower.

MOTION: To authorize Chief Broman to renew a lease with Crown Castle, including the contingency items addressed by Chief Pearson.

Motion: Vice Chairman Houser

Second: Commissioner Christiansen
Vote: Unanimous

- C. Pearson announced that the gutters at Station 35 will need to be replaced due damage done during the recent heavy snow.
- D. Pearson distributed a bid for remounting and refurbishing the chassis of the Aid Unit, however no action is needed at this time.

Commissioner Christiansen asked about educational reimbursement for firefighters that was brought up in labor / management discussions recently. Pearson said the issue will be brought forward by Chief Broman, probably at the next meeting.

IX. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Christiansen applauded the good work by fire fighters during the recent snow and flooding issues.

Vice Chairman Houser also expressed appreciation for the excellent efforts of the fire fighters.

Chairman Kirkbride congratulated the fire fighters on no injuries and no damage to equipment with as many as 52 responses in one day during the most inclement weather. He further congratulated Assistant Chief Dickson for another excellent Health & Safety Newsletter.

X. OTHER INFORMATION

None.

XI. PENDING LIST

	Item	Status
A.	Handbook Draft Revision 3	Policy Documents to be developed.
B.	Extended care for LEOFF 1 employees	Insurance Providers are reviewing applications.
C.	Station Security: Vehicles in Parking Lot	Assigned to Chief Broman to research alternatives and cost.

D.	Juvenile Fire setter Program	Evaluate county-wide program
E.	Maintenance Shop	Evaluate contract work for shop. Commission Christiansen stated that Meridian Hughes has expressed interest, pending the outcome of their proposals to other surrounding Fire districts.

XII. HEARING OF PUBLIC/MEMBERS PRESENT

No comment.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm. No executive session was held.

Chairperson

Commissioner

Commissioner

ATTEST: _____
Secretary