

**WEST THURSTON REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY
RESOLUTION 2022-006**

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF WEST THURSTON REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY, RELATING TO THE DISTRICT'S POLICY TO FOSTER OPEN GOVERNMENT AND ENCOURAGE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DISTRICT MEETINGS.

WHEREAS, Governor Inslee has rescinded Proclamation 20-28, effective June 1, 2022, so that in-person board meetings are allowed again; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Legislature has passed ESHB 1329 and Chapter 42.30 of the RCW (hereinafter the Open Public Meetings Act, or OPMA) has been amended to encourage greater public participation in board meetings, including through the use of technology allowing for remote participation in meetings; **NOW THEREFORE:**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF WEST THURSTON REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. It shall be the policy West Thurston Regional Fire Authority to foster open government and encourage public participation in district board meetings through the implementation of this resolution.

Section 2. Effective June 1, 2022, the Governor of the State of Washington has rescinded Proclamation 20-28 and all subsequent versions thereof. That proclamation prohibited in-person board meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the recent Governor's order continues the state-declared emergency pursuant to applicable laws, the prohibition on in-person meetings has ended, effective June 1, 2022. However, the Legislature in 2022 adopted ESHB 1329, which modified certain OPMA provisions, allowing under certain circumstances the holding of virtual or remote meetings, as an alternative to in-person meetings or in addition to an in-person meeting, especially for individuals with disabilities, or persons who may have difficulty attending.

Section 3. Due to the changes described in Section 2 above, the new board policy on open public meetings is hereby adopted and all prior resolutions and/or policies on this subject are hereby rescinded or superseded by this resolution.

Section 4. The board and district policy on this subject is as follows:

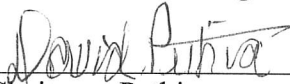
- a. Unless a regular meeting is cancelled pursuant to notice or due to a declared emergency, the regular meetings of this fire district shall be held on the second Monday of each month, commencing at 18:00 hours at the following locations:
 - Littlerock station (10828 Littlerock Rd SW)
Even months (Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec)

- Grand Mound station (18720 Sargent Rd SW)
Odd months (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov)
- b. If the second Monday is a holiday, the meeting shall be held on the following Tuesday at the same time and location.
- c. The district will offer a virtual option to allow remote participation in the meetings by members of the public. Prior to such remote participation, if any member of the public desires to submit a comment, that shall be accomplished by sending electronic mail to the following address at least one half hour prior to the start of the meeting: ChiefOfficers-WestThurston@wtrfa.org. Such written comments will be shared with the board prior to, or at the start of the meeting.
- d. Even if the district ordinarily does not offer a virtual participation option as set forth above, if any member of the public submits a request, a reasonable time prior to any such meeting, stating that they will have difficulty attending in-person due to a disability, limited mobility, or for any other reason that makes physical attendance impossible or difficult for them, then the district will endeavor, when feasible, to accommodate them by offering an alternative way to participate, such as by telephone or other technology.
- e. Board members are always allowed to participate remotely in board meetings as approved by the board chair but should advise the board secretary prior to the meeting so that technology is implemented to assure that the member's remote participation may be heard, or observed and heard by those attending or participating.
- f. Public comment by in-person participants shall always be allowed at all meetings of the board. However, the Chair of the Board may limit such comments to three minutes and will ask the speaker to identify themselves for the minutes. The Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) allows the Chair to control the order of speaking during meetings, so no one will be allowed to speak without first being recognized by the Chair. The District will place on each agenda a "Public Comment Period" and it is requested that comments be made during that designated period. The OPMA allows for suspension of meetings in the event of disruptions that interfere with the work of the Board. The Board has no obligation to respond immediately to either verbal or written comments submitted at or prior to public meetings.
- g. The Board and the district do reserve the right, under prescribed conditions, to hold one or more meetings only by having a virtual or remote option, instead of an in-person meeting. This may be done, but will be done only during a declared local, state, or federal (national) emergency. For example, during a pandemic or other disaster, the Board may determine that safety concerns or other exigencies may make it impossible or unwise to hold an in-person

meeting with reasonable safety. This option will be used sparingly, and when feasible, remote participation by the public will still be offered, to assure transparency and open government.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Board of Fire Commissioners of West Thurston Regional Fire Authority on the 13th day of June, 2022, effective immediately.

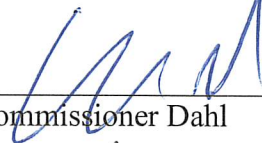
West Thurston Regional Fire Authority



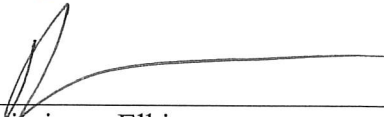
Chairman Pethia



Commissioner Culleton



Commissioner Dahl



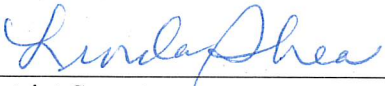
Commissioner Elkins

Commissioner Jernigan



Commissioner Ricks

Attest:



District Secretary

