



Volunteer & Combination Officers Section of The International Association of Fire Chiefs



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VCOS Board of Directors

February 6-7, 2015

TargetSolutions
10805 Rancho Bernardo Road, Ste. 200,
San Diego, California 92127

Minutes

Present: Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Shane Crutcher, Chief Charles Flynn, Chief Randy Larson, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief James Seavey, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Dan Eggleston

Absent: Chief Timothy Wall

Guests: Mr. Troy Markel, Mr. Ron Oettel, Mr. Jeff Siegrist, Chief William Metcalf, Mr. Mike Butler, Mr. Caleb Trowbridge, Mr. Skip Gibson

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen

The meeting started at 9am on Friday, February 6.

Introduction and Welcome of Guests – Chief Crutcher

Chief Crutcher started the meeting. He thanked Chief Metcalf for a great visit to his department yesterday.

Update from Chief William Metcalf

Welcome to San Diego. Thanks to the board members that came out early to visit local departments. They were able to meet with some of the top volunteer leaders in the area. The goal was to expose VCOS to the fire service in San Diego and also to introduce VCOS to them. Thanks to VCOS for all you do for the fire service and the IAFC. Chief Bryant sends his greetings and thanks as well. Chief Eggleston has been doing a great job on the IAFC board.

Western Fire Chiefs Association Update – Mr. Trowbridge

How can we work together to help each other? The WFCA has the Fire Service Bookstore with training materials and textbooks. They also have the Fire Rescue GPO program. It helps save departments time on the RFB process and is free to join. Revenue gets shared back to the IAFC and the Divisions. Can money go back to the section and not just the divisions? Chief Seavey mentioned there had been talks in the past about revenue sharing with sections, but it didn't work out. Mr. Trowbridge will look into it. In return for the revenue share, GPO would ask for marketing opportunities. GPO could be advertised at the Symposium. Mr. Trowbridge will bring this back to the WFCA and then will touch base with Chief Wall.

Chief Eggleston noted that the Western division fees are higher than other divisions and that could deter volunteer departments. That came up twice while visiting local departments yesterday. Maybe a discount for smaller communities?

Mr. Trowbridge can send an e-packet to VCOS with more information about the WFCA. Ms. Ameen gave VCOS educational flyers to Mr. Trowbridge.

Chief Seavey suggested they do another marketing surge or rollout since GPO launched 15 years ago.

Updates from our Friends and Supporters

Target Solutions – They are making a webpage on their site explaining the benefits of the VCOS partnership and adding clarifying language based on the last call. Is their product and price point right for volunteer departments? Mr. Butler is looking for feedback. Is there a service in between what is offered now, perhaps a more scaled-down version?

Chief Crutcher noted that one issue is that only some training courses can go towards state certification and accreditation in KY. Many times in-person training is required. They may want to reach out to the NAFTD to help with the accreditation piece.

Maybe have an advisory group or focus group to get some product feedback? Perhaps at FRI or Symposium?

TargetSolutions could potentially offer a free bundle of courses for VCOS; however they need more volunteer content and help from SMEs. Most of their courses are an hour in length. Are there parts of the VCOS courses like BH&H, FROG, etc. that could be part of this? This platform could potentially be used with the pre-survey for some of the courses. Recruitment and retention could be the first module. It could be co-branded with VCOS and TargetSolutions.

It would be interesting to see how many joint members/clients Target Solutions and VCOS has. Use the VCOS bundle as a free demo to get new departments onto the system.

Training Officer Award – TargetSolutions will update their award nomination page. There will be email blasts to advertise the award. The application period will open in April prior to FDIC and then close at the end of May/early June. Thank you letters for all nominations will be sent with TargetSolutions and VCOS signatures.

Provident – They are happy to sponsor the Buckman award again this year. The application is an online form through Survey Monkey. They plan to reach out to those that weren't selected last year. One idea is to have an open forum at Symposium of previous award winners. It could be Chief Buckman with 3 or 4 recipients. Maybe incorporate it with recruitment and retention? People seem to want more sessions and information on recruitment and retention. The morning pre-conference could focus on recruitment and retention. Just Chief Seavey will be the liaison for the award.

VFIS - They will sponsor two awards this year and will look into sending an e-blast to their clients. They really want to get more applications and are open to any suggestions. **Action items: Chief Windisch will contact Mr. Tim Sendelbach about advertising awards. Ms. Ameen will update the VCOS website. Chief Flynn will see if Chief Jim Wilson is still interested in helping with the Safe Driving Award.** Chief Larson is willing to help with that if needed. Chief Larson is the liaison for the Recruitment and Retention award.

ISO – There are 2 scheduled classes this year in CT and KY. They are looking to do some courses out west. Mr. Gibson suggested that VCOS reach out to the Western division to help with the Symposium West. Chief Curl submitted a report that was included in the board packet.

May Board Meeting – Chiefs Crutcher, Seavey, Windisch

The May board meeting will be in the Emmitsburg, MD area. Board members should travel in on Thursday, April 30. The racecar deck lid presentation will be on Friday, May 1 at the Fire Heritage

Museum. VCOS will conduct its business meeting on Friday and Saturday. Board members can fly back on Sunday. Some board members will stay on Sunday to visit local departments. Mr. Ron Siarnicki said the VCOS meeting can be conducted at the NFFF Chapel both days. It holds 25 people. Chief Seavey is trying to get a reception or dinner together at a local department. Lodging will be at Sleep Inn.

Action item: Chief Seavey will contact local departments for visits. He will also help with setting up the board meeting logistics.

Chief Windisch explained that we were trying to get Joey Logano, Mr. Penske and the President of Shell Pipeline at the dedication. However, only the President of Shell Pipeline is able to attend. The dedication will be on Friday, May 1. Even though Joey Logano can't be there, they will try to get him to do a video clip that can be shown during the presentation. Shell would like to host a dinner Thursday night. They will also put a display together of race day photos. We should work to get some press coverage. Security at the NFA is very tight and we need to find out ahead of time what credentials are needed and get a list of attendees compiled early. Mr. Markel said VFIS is about 1.5 hours away and they are willing to help out and support as needed. Chief Ken Farmer is at the facility and can help.

Chair's Report – Chief Crutcher for Chief Wall

The minutes from the January call were reviewed.

Motion by Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Flynn to approve the minutes from the January board call. Motion carried.

Chief Crutcher mentioned to Provident and VFIS that they are welcome to call in to teleconferences if they are ever interested.

Chiefs Flynn and Larson will be in charge of the FRI scholarships. Chiefs Catrambone and Crutcher are the leads for the Symposium scholarships.

Who is the review team for the Fire Chief of the Year and what is the process? Nominations are reviewed by the Chair of VCOS, Last Year's Winners, the IAFC Executive Director, the IAFC President, the IAFC 1st Vice President, and the Immediate Past President. The application period is open now.

Action item: Everyone should think of someone VCOS should nominate. June 5 is the deadline. We should present our nomination before the May meeting.

A letter from Dr. Onieal regarding the 20th anniversary publication was included in the board packet. He thought it was very well done. Many members have commented on how much they have enjoyed it.

The following people would like seats at the VCOS table at CFSI on April 16: Chiefs Seavey, Eggleston, Crutcher, Oprandy, LaBelle, Crutcher plus a guest. Should we visit congressmen as VCOS and not specifically from our states? **Action item: Ms. Ameen will get a table reserved for the CFSI dinner.**

Departments are needed for the NFFF Suicide Study. Chief Collins may have a suggestion. **Action item: Email Ms. Ameen with any suggestions.**

The Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc. (CPSE), is currently seeking nominations to fill the vacant Commission on Professional Credentialing (CPC) Commissioner position for "agency head representing a volunteer emergency services department." VCOS needs to nominate someone by February 20. They prefer someone that already holds the CFO designation. Chief Larson might know someone.

Treasurer's Report – Chief Windisch

Chief Windisch received preliminary 2014 year-end numbers while at the meeting and will look at them in more detail.

Motion by Chief Catrambone and seconded by Chief Flynn to pay the approximately \$7,500 for additional staff hours used in 2014. Motion carried.

International Director's Report – Chief Eggleston

Volunteer POV Best Practices: The NVFC is meeting at the end of this month to review/approve it. Their view is zero/no tolerance policy on alcohol. Chief Eggleston has not received comments back from SHS. **Action item: Chief Eggleston will send the latest version to Kelly to get to Mr. Stephen Boensel and get feedback from SHS.**

Cancer Prevention Strategy Meeting: There will be a published document from that meeting. Chiefs Seavey and Eggleston attended.

IAFC Board of Directors Meeting: The Human Relations Committee made a presentation about their strategic plan which included doing a program on diversity. Do we turn over the current Diversity Report paper that Mr. Mike Macdonald helped with to the HR Committee and let them run with it or do we want to be the lead? The latest draft was sent to the VCOS board. **Action item: The board will discuss this on the next call.** Maybe Chief Kerr could help push this to get done? Pierce committed another \$5,000 to help with this. **Action item: Chief Eggleston will touch base with Chief Wall and potentially Chief Kerr.**

A new Company Officers Section is in the process of being formed.

Volunteer of the Future – Chief Eggleston and Ms. Ameen

Chief Eggleston explained that he and Chief LaBelle met with some IAFC staff about ideas for what the volunteer of the future looks like and what the volunteer fire service needs. These ideas are being used to create a SAFER recruitment and retention proposal. Ms. Ameen stated that IAFC staff is currently working to write the proposal. She asked for VCOS' support with several tasks that will be included in the proposal. One task is creating a toolkit to help new fire chiefs run the business of a fire department. This toolkit could be in the form of a handbook or ribbon report and would include examples of best practices, templates and guides, sample SOPs/SOGs, etc. Another task involves delivering training that focuses on company officers and the next generation of leaders. Some of the existing VCOS courses can be used and potentially parts of them can be put online for greater impact and reach. Finally, a report of the state of the fire service will be produced and VCOS could help with that. Ms. Ameen asked if VCOS felt these items were valid and worth submitting. The VCOS board thought they made sense and said they would support those efforts.

Member Survey Results – Chief Catrambone

Chief Catrambone thoroughly went through the survey and then made calls to some other departments to ask them some additional questions. Some observations from the survey discussed by the group included:

- We should target company officers more
- All volunteer departments is low for type of survey respondents
- The top challenges departments indicated they are facing are recruitment and retention, budget, leadership issues, and succession planning
- There is an awareness issue with the various VCOS educational opportunities. Perhaps we need better descriptions on the website?
- Only about ½ of respondents knew about the Ribbon Reports. Can we send an informational packet out to new chief officers? How would we do that? Can VCOS establish "ambassadors" in different regions to help spread the VCOS message?
- People seem to prefer using the website.
- Overall VCOS is highly rated.
- We need to find a better way to get VCOS information out.
- People want leadership information.
- We should look at where people are getting their information and do partnerships with those organizations.

- We need to figure out how to reach out to people better. Get a cross-sectional group together. Maybe do a webinar or a focus group? **Action item: Chief Eggleston will work on this.**
- Can we write articles for state magazines on a regular basis? Can a template letter be sent to different states? **Action item: Chief Crutcher will work on a template letter.**
- Reach out to the survey respondents about awards, scholarships and other VCOS opportunities.
- Look into Facebook ads?
- **Action item: Create an interest list of people that want to be more engaged.** Use them for committee openings, etc.
- Invite Mr. Terry Monroe on a conference call to explore ideas to better market VCOS and communicate with existing members.
- Keep in perspective that the survey data is only from less than 10% of VCOS membership. Be careful not to make definitive statements about the results.
- We should focus on marketing VCOS to existing IAFC members that are not VCOS members.

2015 Symposium in the Sun – Symposium Committee

We will use the same marketing plan as before. The registration fee is the same.

Motion by Chief Eggleston and seconded by Chief Flynn for up to \$5,000 to be used towards the Symposium app for 2015. Motion carried.

Chief Catrambone received feedback that the Symposium isn't for company officers, but rather it is a chiefs' retreat. Maybe we can use the Company Officers Committee to get information out through them? There could be a breakout specifically for company officers. Maybe Symposium West could focus on company officers?

A few themes have been discussed. One is Jack of all trades or Jake of all trades.

Executive Session

Motion by Chief Crutcher and seconded by Chief Flynn to go into Executive Session. Motion carried.

The board then went into Executive session. After coming back from Executive session, the following motion was made.

Motion by Chief Eggleston and seconded by Chief Collins to immediately open the process for submissions for the open at-large VCOS board member seat with a term through 2016. 300 words or less must be submitted to Chief Florentino by March 1. Motion carried.

Pipeline Initiatives – Chief Seavey and Mr. Richard Miller

Mr. Richard Miller of the IAFC called in to provide an update on some initiatives with TransCanada. They are interested in doing a 90 minute presentation at Symposium. **Action item: Mr. Richard Miller will send Chief Windisch an outline/description of this session.**

They are also working to schedule town hall type events throughout the country. This is a 6-hour interactive training dealing with communications about emergency response for pipeline emergencies. It also includes some breakouts. The town halls would be customized for each area. They are aiming to present this in 15 locations. TransCanada has provided a potential list of 15 locations. The goal is to get four done before FRI.

The VCOS board stated that these trainings need to be different from the standard type of classes that all industry companies are mandated to do. They need to be more tailored to the fire and emergency services. Since they are required to do these trainings there ends up being so many. **Action item: Mr.**

Richard Miller will try to come to the VCOS May board meeting to give an overview of the town hall training outline. They are still working to flush it out.

Chief Catrambone said he recently received a PowerPoint from several government agencies that over exaggerates the risks of crude oil. We need to make sure we get the message right and present realistic information. The reality is that more communities are seeing crude oil now for the first time, not that it is more dangerous. There needs to be more awareness of actual risks. It is currently being blown out of proportion. Chief Eggleston commented that the Lynchburg accident got a lot of visibility.

Future Symposium Further West – Symposium Committee

What are we looking to get out of this additional symposium? What is the purpose? Do we dilute things if we do another one? We want discussions between people from all over the U.S. and not just regional conversations. Make this conference a different focus.

Partner with the NVFC on this? This is the VCOS flagship so do we risk partnering with the NVFC and losing that?

Looking at May 2016 for this. If we charge about \$200 per person and get 200 people, we will have about \$40,000 in revenue. We should be able to keep expenses below that, but we may need a \$10,000 buffer in case anything unexpected comes up. We can do the May board meeting at this event and that would give us some cost savings. Preliminary 2014 Symposium numbers show we made around \$80,000 which gives us the ability to try this.

Do we have vendors exhibit at this? Provident sees a lot of value in exhibiting at the VCOS type shows. VFIS likes how the VCOS Symposium is intimate and interactive. We could invite new vendors that are regional.

We need to get the date and venue solidified as soon as possible and then we can determine the strategy, theme, etc.

Action item: The Symposium Committee needs to come back with more of a plan and then we will make a decision. Overall the feeling from the group was to move forward in doing this. Even if we break even, it is worth it.

Labor and Management Collaboration Project – Chief Larson

The second draft of the project paper was included in the board packet. The document needs to be cleaned up a bit with tone and terms like volllie, and grammar. We don't want to offend or turn off volunteers. The IAFC will have to review as well.

There will be a presentation at FRI 2015. There will be a focus group again at this year's Symposium that will include some of the same people and some new people. It will be invitation only. The name is Labor and Management Collaboration in Combination Staffed Organizations. There will also be a second guided discussion to include labor. **Action item: Chief Larson will work on a plan for this meeting.** There is money in the budget for that meeting. Chief Larson said that the meeting may be in St. Louis and will cost about \$5,000.

Diversity Report Draft – Chief Eggleston

The Diversity Report was covered during Chief Eggleston's International Director update. The board received the latest version. This will be a topic on the next board call.

NVFC SAFER Grant – Chief Flynn

An update from the last call was included in the board packet. Strong leadership and hands-on recruitment continues to be the key to successfully bringing in new people. The next teleconference is on Wednesday and Chief Flynn will have more information then.

2015 Booth Schedule – Chief Crutcher

The tentative 2015 schedule is as follows:

- February 18-22: Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Fire Rescue Conference
- April 20-25: FDIC – IAFC has a booth
- May 15-17: Pennsylvania Expo (tentative)
- June 8-13: Interschutz in Germany
 - VCOS presence – Chief Seavey
- July 14-18: Firehouse Expo (tentative)
- August 25-29: FRI
- November 12-15: Symposium in the Sun

Action item: Chief Seavey will follow up with Chief Wall about the Pennsylvania Expo.

Exhibiting Taskforce – Chief Seavey

The taskforce is made up of 2 board members (Chiefs Seavey and Collins), 2 vendors (Mr. Scott Beecher and Mr. Dan Seidberg), and 2 at-large VCOS members (Chief Mike Morgan and Chief Russell Hartung).

Chiefs Seavey and Collins are working to define the goals of exhibiting. They are looking at the VCOS strategic plan, mission statement, and projects. Chiefs Morgan and Hartung are working on what the booth should look like. Mr. Seidberg and Mr. Beecher will recommend what conferences to go to.

Action item: Recommendations will be presented at the May board meeting.

Communications Committee – Chiefs Crutcher, Catrambone, Larson

You should receive the Symposium issue of the newsletter next week. There will be an iWomen article for the next newsletter. There will also be an article or blurb on the local department visits here in San Diego. **Action item: Chief Seavey will write this article.**

Based on the member survey, we need a new plan to get the VCOS message out. **Action item: Chief Crutcher will do more research and come up with a plan.**

VCOS Strategic Plan – Chief Crutcher

Each goal was put on a separate tab as suggested at the Symposium. Chief Collins asked what the purpose of the strategic plan is and how best to integrate those goals on a regular basis. The goals need to be more specific and they should apply to VCOS and not the entire fire service.

2015 Election – Chief Crutcher

The terms of office ending in 2015 include Chiefs Catrambone, Seavey, and Wall. Chief Florentino is chair of the Elections Committee. **Action item: Check the election timeline with Chief Florentino. Also contact him regarding the newly vacated term through 2016.**

VISION – Chief Crutcher

There is \$11,000 in the budget this year for VISION including funds for a meeting. **Action item: Chief Wall is reaching out to Chief Wilson to see if he can help with this project and get additional resources posted.**

Additional Submitted Reports

- VCOS membership numbers as of January 14, 2015: 2,454 total members, 1972 regular members, 73 associate members, 64 departmental members, 117 affiliate members, 16 past president members, 210 life members, 2 electronic members.
 - **Action item: Look into if life members can join sections and if not, why? What is the criteria for life members?**
 - Electronic membership is about \$100 per year and includes access to the IAFC online resources.
- Near Miss Taskforce – Assistant Fire Marshal Dan Kerrigan

- Near Miss may be interested in doing some type of scholarship to the VCOS Symposium. We need to get more info on what they are thinking about.
- You and ISO – Chief Larry Curl
- LTC – Chief Ron Cheves
 - They are adding more content to the course. They are adding information for departments that are already combination.
- IAFC Terrorism & Homeland Security Committee – Chief Ed Richards
- NFPA 950 – Chief Melby recommended as main rep and Assistant Chief Byron Smith nominated as alternate
- ACA Taskforce – Chief Daniel Noonan
- Feedback from Team Building Issue of *On Scene*
- NFORS – Assistant Chief Byron Smith
- NFPA Technical Committee 350: Confined Space Safe Work Practices – Chief Ed Boring – **Action item: Find out who pays for this and for our other NFPA representatives. Get that list to Chief Windisch.**
- Chief Brett Waters’ Various Projects
 - Should Chief Render be involved with Chief Waters for the BH&H Canadian delivery? **Action item: Ms. Ameen to put Chiefs Waters and Render in touch with one another about this.**
 - BUP program: Mr. Cohen is transferring the program to the fire service and to the state organization level. **Action item: Get an update from Chief Wall on if he has talked to Mr. Cohen recently.**

New Business

Chief Seavey provided additional information on the Cancer Prevention Summit. A summary report from several representatives that attended with the NVFC was distributed to the VCOS board. Chief Seavey helped to write it. The summit was by invitation only and organized by the NFFF. About 60 people attended of which about a quarter were medical institute/research people. Many career departments were represented, but not many volunteers. Very good research was presented. Volunteers were definitely underrepresented at the meeting. The Firefighter Cancer Support Network meeting experience was very different as volunteers were heard and included more. Chief Seavey suggested putting together a committee with the NVFC on this cancer issue. **Action item: The Executive Committee should talk to the IAFC leadership and SHS about putting together a committee on this but make sure the focus stays on volunteers. Chief Wall should reach out to Chief Bryant and/or the SHS chair on this.**

Old Business

No additional old business was discussed.

Roundtable

For the next meeting we will use a general template for all board packet reports. It will be based on the IAFC board template.

Chief Seavey: The local visits here were great. Those departments really felt appreciated.

Chief Windisch: Mr. Scott Beecher and Mr. Dan Seidberg are doing a lot of outreach with the VCOS through their companies.

Chief Crutcher: The local visits really went well and showed the value of VCOS. Those departments treated us very well and professionally. The visits were very engaging. Chief Crutcher encouraged board members to stay involved and find others to get more involved. Make that your mission. Chief Crutcher asked if any other business needed to be conducted. He ensured all board members and issues were given the proper attention and that nothing felt too rushed. The board felt like it was a productive meeting and accomplished all goals.

Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Windisch to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 5pm. The next call is 3/12 at 4pm ET.