



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



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VCOS Board of Directors Meeting

**November 15, 2015
1-6pm
Mandalay Room of the Hilton
Clearwater Beach, Florida**

MINUTES

Present: Chief Donna Black, Chief Shane Crutcher, Chief Charles Flynn, Chief Randy Larson, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief James Seavey, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Dan Eggleston, Chief Timothy Wall, Chief Ed Rush

Absent: None

Guests: Mr. Troy Markel, Mr. Ron Oettel, Mr. Jeff Siegrist, Mr. Joe Giorgi, Dr. Bill Jenaway, Chief Chris Christopoulos, Mr. Dan Siedberg, Mr. Tom Weber, Ms. Rhianna Syvertsen, Chief John Oprandy, Chief John Sinclair

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen, Ms. Jennifer Cooke, Ms. Sara Stehle, Mr. Tim Hopkins

The meeting started at 12:52 pm.

Introduction and Welcome of Guests – Chief Timothy Wall

Chief Wall welcomed the VCOS Board of Directors, VCOS members, friends and supporters.

Updates from IAFC Conferences Staff – Ms. Jennifer Cooke and Ms. Sara Stehle

There were 537 attendees this year. We held registrations in advance to 500 and there were some walk-ins. The total number with staff and exhibitors was 677 which is similar to last year. \$195,000 was collected in registration fees. For pre-conference only there were 7 people. Conference only attendees was 114. Full conference was 416 this year which was more than last year.

There was some hotel noise due to construction at the beginning of the week, but it wasn't a major issue. We are looking at the Hilton room block process and may try to do it differently next year. People book hotels before they register and then sometimes never end up registering for the conference. This causes last minute hotel cancellations. In the past, the hotel block opened in February and then conference registration opened in April. Maybe we open them up in March at the same time? We will look into this.

One suggestion was not to have a pre-conference day and just start the conference on Thursday. That could allow us to end the conference on Saturday night.

There were 190 non-members this year. 32 new members and renewals were collected on site.

Action item for Kelly: What were results from last year in reaching out to non-members after the show?

Board members should be introduced during the first day at the general session (pre-conference) so that attendees can recognize them throughout the entire time.

One suggestion to entice people to become VCOS members is to open up registration early to VCOS members only.

Action item: Chief Crutcher has app feedback he will compile and send to the board. People requested wifi in conference areas. Do they really need it? We want them to pay attention in classes. But it may be needed for the app.

Consider having the VCOS board come a day earlier to have the break-out meetings.

Overall, vendors were pleased. The electricity charge when there is a plug behind them on the wall is odd. We charge \$180 to use a wall plug.

Final invoices/expenses should be in by the end of the year.

Future conference dates: Nov 10-13; 2016 (that Friday is Veterans Day). Other dates are 11/9-11/12, 2017; and 11/8-11/11/2018.

Symposium in the West has 5 attendees so far. The theme is "Dare to Lead." Marketing emails will be sent to VCOS members, past attendees, and some leads on our list-serv. A save the date postcard will be mailed soon. The brochure will be mailed in January. In April, the on-site guide will be complete. The entire conference will be a general session format with no breakouts. One idea was to have 18-20 minute talks (like Ted Talks) based on topics from the survey feedback. There will not be exhibitors, but there will be sponsorship opportunities. The sponsorship goal is \$10,000. There will be different sponsorship packages which will be equal in value. Sponsor options may include sponsoring speakers, meals/coffee, lanyards, etc. We still want to give visibility to sponsors.

Friday will be a full day of general session from about 8am -4:30pm and then a networking reception after that. Saturday is a half day or maybe slightly longer to make it worthwhile for travel, etc. We need to make sure the conference is worth the \$1,500 travel cost for attendees. **Action item: The Committee will see if Saturday should be extended to make it even more worthwhile.** Consider having the reception on Thursday night instead.

When will the speakers be announced? We can add that to the website at any time once we have a commitment from them. The committee is still working on them at this time.

CPSE Commission on Professional Credentialing – Chief Christopoulos

He attended his first meeting in March. There are two face to face meetings a year. The next one is in the spring in Orlando. Then after that they meet at FRI. Are the designations cost prohibitive for smaller organizations? How many designees are volunteers? They are trying to get more data on that. Should we consider scholarships for designees? Some insurers provide scholarships. There was recent discussion on renewals after retirement. As long as a candidate remains current in education/participation they can be recertified. Chief Windisch recommends only 1 renewal after retirement. This needs to be defined. Chief Christopoulos reported that the VCOS endorsement was accepted by the CPSE CPC. Should there be an alternate fee structure for volunteers? Is there a Volunteer CFO designation we can start? What competencies would be needed and different from CFO? CPSE may need to look at their business plan given that 70% of fire service is volunteer. More points are given for having a college degree. Consider looking at work experience and equivalency and factor that in. We don't want to have different expectations for volunteers, and we don't want to water the certification down. Should VCOS sponsor someone to be a designee?

Target Solutions – Ms. Rhianna Syvertsen

Target Solutions still wants to sponsor the Training Officer Award at FRI and would like to renew the partnership with VCOS for 2016. We will be scheduling a conference call with the committee. They may be interested in sponsoring a speaker for Symposium in the West and would like to see the speaker list when it is ready. They'd like to get VCOS involved with users groups/focus groups. They can also post VCOS resources on their community resources center on the Target Solutions site. It is quickly becoming an intranet with resources for lots of organizations include the cancer network, VFIS, and others. Target Solutions is very happy with its partnership with VCOS.

Chair's Report – Chief Wall

Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Larson to approve the minutes from the October board call. Motion carried.

Chief Wall referenced the 2016 Fire Service Calendar of Events in the board packet. We are currently working on our partnership agreement with Firehouse. The dates for CFSI may change because Congress is not in session during the current dates of May 4-5. That information will be passed along once we hear more. VCOS will have a table with 10 seats. We try to invite VCOS board and committee members to sit at the table. Chief Wall rotated some of the VCOS board award liaisons and reviewed the 2016 committee list. Any questions or concerns on that list should be sent to him. We will clean up some of the historical committees still listed. Chief Catrambone will be the VCOS rep for the ALERT grant.

Vice Chair's Report – Chief Crutcher

Chief Crutcher yielded his time to the specific reports later on the agenda.

International Director's Report – Chief Eggleston

Chief Eggleston is now on the Executive Committee of the IAFC board and has a conference call every Monday. He mentioned that the IAFC has received lots of new grants recently. There is a meeting in the spring to talk about the structure of the IAFC and roles. It will be more of a facilitated discussion and no firm decisions will be made there. One of the topics will be division dues.

Webinars – Chief Oprandy

165 people registered for the last 3 webinars. About 85 attendees were actually on them. Some departments show webinars on a screen and there are more people in the room and it is hard to capture those numbers. VCOS pays \$1,000 for the webinar system each year. Please recommend presenters to him. Should we record sessions at the Symposium and post them in a webinar format? Should we do the Ted Talk format from Symposium in the West on there? We could use the IAFC Academy.

Chief Buckman suggested doing a webinar series based on the 12 chapters of the VFIS Leadership book. We could have participants write a paper on two of the topics and get some type of certificate at the end. This would be a new educational offering from VCOS. The board agreed to move forward with this idea. We are doing so much education. We need an education coordinator to make sure we don't have duplication. **Action item: Assign a VCOS educational coordinator for all VCOS programs.**

Secretary-Treasurer's Report – Chief Collins

Chief Collins reviewed the financials to-date for 2015. He explained that the airfare/hotel item in the general fund was higher due to the LEC meeting. The 20th anniversary publication made the publication line item higher. Everything is looking good with year-end budget numbers. He created a separate sheet to show the budget for all education classes combined.

Chief Collins asked for any questions on the 2016 budget and mentioned that IAFC Treasurer Carrizzo is presenting all budgets to the IAFC board soon and they will be approved in December. The board had no further questions.

Updates from our Friends and Supporters

Provident and VFIS agreed to sponsor awards again next year. The new board liaisons for the awards are as follows:

- Buckman Award: Chiefs Seavey, Rush, Collins
- VFIS Awards: Chiefs Windisch & Flynn
- Training Officer Award: Chiefs Collins & Eggleston, Capt. Sedlak
- Emerging Leadership Scholarship: Chief Wall
- Symposium Scholarships: Chiefs Crutcher & Seavey
- FRI Scholarships: Chiefs Larson & Black

There were no applications for the Safe Driving Award this year. There was a suggestion to do an award dealing with safety and health instead. We need to make sure it doesn't overlap with awards already done by the Safety, Health and Survival Section. Maybe we can do a "safety initiative award" that highlights a certain initiative and can be anything from cancer prevention to safe driving etc.

Action item: VFIS will think more about this and come up with an idea with the VCOS board liaisons for the award.

Action item: For the February board meeting, have award timelines, marketing, and guidelines prepared.

ISO reported that the new schedule is going well. They are 3 years in to it and there were significant changes. There were 13,000 class 9s now there are only 11,000 with the revision. There are now 135 class 1s when before there were 50. They are focusing more on training. They received some You and ISO inquiries after the Symposium. They want to do some classes in Colorado. Next Saturday there is a class in Indiana. They are trying to do all states in 6 months. Chief Eggleston recommended that ISO incorporate model policies for volunteer POVs into their schedule and ratings.

Digital Center Update – Mr. Tim Hopkins

Mr. Hopkins reported that the POV Response paper had 1,700 page views on the website and over 20,000 impressions on social media. The POV Response paper was a great example of using digital media via apps, website, webinars, social media. He reported that the IAFC website will be redesigned. They might need some testers during design/implementation. There are now GIS capabilities at the IAFC.

IAFC Leadership Update - Chief John Sinclair

Chief Sinclair is from a combination department and appreciates being here. He gave a historic perspective of how the IAFC was initially formed and divided divisions by rail hubs. The structure of the IAFC has been discussed many times since the IAFC's inception so there is no surprise it is coming up again recently. In the spring they will discuss the IAFC's governance structure. The IAFC board has many new board members with fresh perspectives and new ideas. He commented that VCOS should try to get a member in each of the 3,000 counties in the U.S. He congratulated the VCOS board on a great conference as always.

Discussion and Action Items:

Bylaws & Election – Chief Timothy Wall

Chief Windisch reviewed suggested bylaws changes. He worked with Chief Florentino on them. If we submit them earlier, we can incorporate them early next year to make the cycle for the International Director work.

There was discussion on if the 2 limit rule for divisions should apply to the International Director. That role is different from an at-large director. This needs to be better explained in the bylaws. In the end,

the board agreed that the International Director is not subject to the divisional limits. Chief Windisch will reword the bylaws to make that more clear. **Action item: Chief Windisch will present the new wording on the December conference call.**

The board agreed to all of the other bylaws changes. Changes are due to the IAFC by February 1 at the latest.

The terms ending in 2016 are: Chief Donna Black, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Dan Eggleston, and Chief Shane Crutcher.

Cancer Position Statements - Chief Seavey

The board reviewed three separate cancer position statements.

Motion by Chief Seavey and seconded by Chief Flynn to approve and forward the three cancer position statements to the IAFC board for consideration and adoption. Motion carried.

A summary of a cancer initiative meeting from October was included in the board packet.

Kidde Partnership – Chiefs Wall and Crutcher

The Kidde partnership is moving forward. The Executive Committee met with Kidde while here at Symposium. The official agreement is still being worked on and will be funneled through the Executive Committee. After all the details are flushed out, there will be a few VCOS representatives assigned to this project. The theme is "Step Up and Stand Out." Some VCOS board members may have the opportunity to represent VCOS at 4-5 press events on Craig Morgan's tour.

Beyond Hoses and Helmets

Motion by Chief Eggleston and seconded by Chief Larson to raise the honorarium by \$50 for all VCOS class deliveries. Motion carried.

Chief Windisch commented that some classes haven't reached the minimum attendee count. We should consider a deposit fee that is refundable. **Action item: We will have an education coordinator finalize this with program leads. Bring this to the February board meeting.**

Leading the Transition (LTC) Course – Chief Cheves

There were two courses delivered this year. There is a class coming up in December. LTC has been presented at many conferences the last few years. They have been getting the word out in the VCOS newsletter. The class needs to be updated. They would like to have a meeting in January or February. The LEC project should be tied into this. There are currently 17 committee members and they will revise the instructor cadre list at the meeting too. There is \$8,800 in the budget for 2016. The host agency pays for hotel and travel, but VCOS pays the honorarium. Did we set aside money for the rewrite? There was a suggestion to hold off doing any classes in 2016 until the updates are completed.

Leadership and Employee Collaboration Project (LEC) – Chief Larson

Chief Mike Morgan is chair of the group. They are requesting \$10,000 in the budget for 2016 to move forward with the program. There will be two pilot programs conducted in 2016. They will develop a sliding scale for revenue on this to include pricing from a few phone calls to a full scale facilitation.

Motion by Chief Crutcher and seconded by Chief Flynn to approve \$10,000 for the LEC project for 2016. Motion carried.

VCOS 2016 Booth Schedule (tentative)

The following shows are on the list for 2016:

- New York Chiefs: June 15-18 in Verona, NY. Chief Rush confirmed he can staff this. Chief Seavey plans to attend and maybe Chief Wall too. **Action item: Ms. Ameen will get the booth put into the VCOS name.**
- Firehouse Expo: Oct 18-22 in Nashville, TN
- FRI: August 17-20 in San Antonio, TX
- Symposium in the Sun: Nov 9-12 in Clearwater Beach, FL
- VCOS could work with the IAFC on a cost share for FDIC. We need to look into this more.

Exhibiting Task Force – Chiefs Seavey and Collins

Chief Seavey reported other conferences VCOS may want to exhibit at include: the Northwest Fire Expo, South Atlantic Expo in Charlotte in August and FDIC. Chief Seavey is working on getting a discounted booth for FDIC. Chief Black can help with the South Atlantic Expo in NC. Chief Cheves usually goes to the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs Conference and staffs a booth. He can do that again in 2016. The only cost is to ship the banner and materials.

The task force is looking to retool the displays. They have received some estimates and will have a more formal estimate/proposal to board by the end of the year.

Chief Seavey followed up on a conversation from the last conference call regarding LOSAP issues in Montgomery County. It will cost \$40,000 to draw up an opinion letter on this. **Action items: The board suggested that Chief Seavey work with the IAFC's Government Relations department. They can then talk to the NVFC as well. Chief Seavey will reach out to his Senator too. Chief Seavey will send an email to the VCOS board will all relevant information which can then be sent to the IAFC Government Relations department.**

Motion by Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Rush to work with the IAFC's Government Relations department on the Montgomery County LOSAP issue. Motion carried.

2016 VCOS Board Meetings

- February in Reno
 - Fly in Thursday, Feb 4. Meeting is Friday, Feb 5 & Saturday, Feb 6. Fly home Sunday, Feb 7.
- May in Reno at Symposium in the West
 - Fly in Thursday, May 12 (may change if we do board meeting on Thurs)
 - Conference is Friday and Saturday (May 13-14)
 - Board meeting most of the day on Saturday? Feedback and discuss
 - Fly home Sunday, May 15

We are currently working on the hotel contract for the February board meeting.

When should we have the May board meeting? Should we have it on Thursday and then some on Saturday? Or should it be most of the day on Saturday? Most of the board felt that Thursday would be best so that the board can be visible and present for the first Symposium in the West.

VFIS is willing to host a board meeting. We may go to Canada in 2017 or 2018.

Communications Committee – Chiefs Crutcher, Larson, and Rush

We received website stats from the IAFC Digital Team. The top viewed pages are e-learning, the POV Response paper, Beyond Hoses and Helmets, SOPs/SOGs, and the Join page. There have been nearly 13,000 page views since April.

We may want to get the newsletter into a different format so we can link to separate articles more easily. Mr. Ron Oettel offered to help if needed.

Chief Crutcher sent the VCOS board the app feedback from Symposium.

Ms. Cathy Feyh processed 32 new members/renewals while at the conference.

Chief Crutcher has "boosted" some of the VCOS facebook posts which have seen great results. He will do that for Symposium in the West too.

The committee wants to look into a VCOS app with some content that would be member-only. **Action item: The committee will look into prices and work with Mr. Tim Hopkins. They will report back at the February board meeting.** Eventually, it would be great to have an IAFC app, but VCOS does not want to wait for the IAFC if that will take longer. Mr. Dan Seidberg is willing to help with this too.

Information Only Items:

Membership Report – Chief Wall

- VCOS membership numbers as of October 2015: 2,542 total members, 2017 regular members, 76 associate members, 60 departmental members, 154 affiliate members, 16 past president members, 217 life members, 2 electronic members
- Pilot program with Ward Diesel and iamresponding –not a lot of results yet. They may need to update and improve the content. The vendors tried to hand out VCOS materials at shows on behalf of VCOS and used social media to advertise VCOS.

Additional Submitted Reports

The following written reports were included in the board packet:

- NFPA 1720 – Chief Render (pg. 63)
- Near Miss Program – Chiefs Rush and Kerrigan (pgs. 64-66)
- NVFC SAFER Grant – Chief Flynn (pgs. 67-71)
- IAFC Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Task Force – Chief Mohler (pg. 72)
- IAFC Helix Project – Chiefs Flynn and Rush (pg. 73)
- IAFC Terrorism & Homeland Security Committee – Chief Ed Richards (pg. 74)
- NFPA 350: Confined Space Safe Work Practices–Chief Ed Boring (pgs. 75-76)
- FRI Scholarships - Chief Larson (pg. 77)
- Recruitment and Retention Award – Chief Larson (pg. 78)
- FROG – Chief Collins (pgs. 79-80)

New Business

Chief Crutcher: Mentioned the Keystone Conference in PA. The conference is expanding and doing something with junior firefighters. Can we promote that? They offered for VCOS to meet up there too. Pennwell did a study and found that the metro Philadelphia area is the best for volunteer conferences since there are many volunteers within a 10 hour drive. This conference took over the same week that Firehouse Expo had in Baltimore. We will have to run it through the IAFC to see if we can promote it. It is a private company running the show.

Action item: Chief Black and Chief Windisch will work on a new board member packet to help orient new board members.

The Divisions/Section representatives meeting went well. There is excitement about working more together. They talked about the cancer position statements. They really enjoyed talking as a group for the first time. There will be an email chain going now with that group. Ms. Cathy Feyh is going to take the presentation from the meeting back to the IAFC to educate others.

Action item: Send suggestions for an education coordinator to the Executive Committee and we will discuss that on the December call.

Chief Windisch: He attended a LODD conference in TX. They talked about the emerging issue of cancer in the fire service. An idea came up to raise VCOS dues by \$5 and earmark it and give it to the NFFF for cancer research projects. This would yield about \$11,000. **Action item: He will get a synopsis from Chief Ron Siarnicki.** We don't have good statistics on cancer affecting volunteers and this would help.

Old Business

The national SAFER grant will help produce the Diversity Report and create other deliverables/resources. A concept paper/executive summary will be printed and handed out at Symposium in the West. Then later there will be a toolkit and a "living" document that can be updated as needed.

With support from the national SAFER grant, we may have the opportunity to do a volunteer summit in 2017 or 2018 to discuss recruitment, retention, and other volunteer/combinaton issues. This could be a follow-up to the summit a few years ago which created VISION. VCOS should consider setting aside some money for this.

Chief Wayne Senter, Executive Director of Washington Fire Chiefs, sent a letter to Chairman Wall stating that can't afford section dues since he is required to pay the IAFC division dues. Chairman Wall shared the letter with the board.

We are working on several NFFF projects/committees. We will work to get that more centralized.

Roundtable

No additional roundtable comments were made.

VCOS board calls will now be the second Wednesday of each month at 4pm ET. A group may go to Reno early in February to meet with local departments.

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

The meeting ended at 5:58pm. The next call is 12/9 at 4pm ET.