



# Volunteer & Combination Officers Section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs

4795 Meadow Wood Lane, Suite 100 • Chantilly, VA 20151 • Tel: 703.273.0911 • IAFC.org



## VCOS Board of Directors Meeting

**April 22-24, 2021  
Hilton Clearwater Beach, Florida**

### MINUTES

#### **Thursday, April 22 (at Hilton Clearwater Beach, 400 Mandalay Ave, Clearwater, FL 33767)**

Present: Chair Charles Flynn, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Jim Cook, Chief Ron Oettel, Chief Rich Cowger, Chief Ed Rush, Chief Al Yancey

Absent: Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Kevin Hardwick

Guests: Chief John M. Buckman III, Ms. Jennifer Bragiel, Mr. Scott Beecher, Mr. Barry Balliet, Mr. Greg Render, Mr. Mark Colamarino, Ms. Vickie Pritchett, Chief Tim Holman, Mr. Mike Sweitzer, Chief Tim Wall, Chief Shane Crutcher, Mr. Dan Seidberg (on the phone)

Staff: Ms. Kaitlin Lutz

The meeting started at 9:10 AM

#### **Loudoun County Fire-Rescue Social Media Presentation – Ms. Jennifer Bragiel**

Ms. Bragiel reviewed the social media efforts and strategy of Loudoun County Fire-Rescue.

Discussed recommendations for VCOS social media: Pull interactive activities from NFPA and USFA to post, keep videos under two minutes.

Chief Crutcher suggested the board consider putting some dollar amount towards promoting VCOS social media posts. Said we have learned that social media is not free.

Chief Oettel discussed the goals of the marketing committee. Emphasized the need for commitment to marketing efforts and the need for setting goals to be able to evaluate their efforts.

Chief Flynn noted that due to IAFC staff reductions, the board needs to look at how they can take some of the social media work off staff.

Group exercise discussion. Utilize social media for retention, recruitment, and leadership, communicate with members; Target audience: volunteers, vendors/partners, officers (Lt. and up), new members, volunteers that are not part of VCOS, people that attend VCOS conferences; Workflow: Idea to utilize Communications Committee or subgroup of communications committee with tech-savvy people to help create social media content that is then filtered to IAFC staff to post. Need a formalized process and defined workflow; Brand and Voice: Diverse, need a tagline like "VCOS: enhancing and developing leaders," want their "celebrity voice" to be like Morgan Freeman (tone, reflection, command, presence) or Gary Sinise (charity work, trusted).

### **Strategic Direction – Chief Yancey**

Chief Yancey led a strategic direction discussion with the VCOS Board. They went through common themes in the SWOT analysis.

Chief Yancey discussed how the section needs to focus in on their mission (what do we do now?) and vision (where do we want to be in three years?).

Chief Cowger reminded the board of the project management Go, No Go Worksheet that could be used to help determine what projects the board takes on.

This discussion will be continued on Saturday.

### **Chiefs Roundtable**

Meeting broke to start the Virtual Chief's Roundtable at 3 PM ET.

### **Marketing/Branding Committee – Chief Oettel**

Chief Oettel gave an update on the VCOS marketing plan. The marketing plan framework has been created, now the committee is working on flushing it out.

Chief Windisch commented that the budget for marketing is open to discussion in a positive way following this weekend.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM ET.

### **Friday, April 23 (at Hilton Clearwater Beach, 400 Mandalay Ave, Clearwater, FL 33767)**

Board was in executive session until 1 PM ET.

Present: Chair Charles Flynn, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Jim Cook, Chief Ron Oettel, Chief Rich Cowger, Chief Ed Rush, Chief Al Yancey

Absent: Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Kevin Hardwick

Guests: Chief John M. Buckman III, Ms. Jennifer Bragiel, Mr. Scott Beecher, Mr. Barry Balliet, Mr. Greg Render, Mr. Mark Colamarino, Ms. Vickie Pritchett, Chief Tim Holman, Mr. Mike Sweitzer, Chief Tim Wall, Chief Shane Crutcher, Mr. Dan Siehberg (on the phone)

Staff: Ms. Kaitlin Lutz

The meeting started at 1:15 PM ET.

### **Symposium in the Sun Committee – Chief John Buckman**

Chief Buckman briefed the board on the discussion the Symposium in the Sun Committee had including using the garage for the exhibit hall, creating a "hall of thanksgiving" with signs to thank vendors for participating, adding a second lunch and needing a sponsor for this lunch, and modifying the schedule to allow more time for folks to visit exhibitors in the garage exhibit hall.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM ET.

**Saturday, April 24 (at Hilton Clearwater Beach, 400 Mandalay Ave, Clearwater, FL 33767)**

Present: Chair Charles Flynn, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Jim Cook, Chief Ron Oettel, Chief Rich Cowger, Chief Ed Rush, Chief Al Yancey

Absent: Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Kevin Hardwick

Guests: Chief John M. Buckman III, Mr. Scott Beecher, Mr. Barry Balliet, Mr. Mike Colamarino, Ms. Jennifer Bragiel

Staff: Ms. Kaitlin Lutz

The meeting started at 9:10 AM

**Welcome and Morning Comments – Chair Flynn**

Chair Flynn led the group in a moment of silence for the loss of former board member Chief Steve Miller and those lost during the COVID pandemic. He welcomed the board and guests to the meeting and asked everyone present to introduce themselves and offer any comments.

Morning Comments:

- Chief Buckman gave an update on his education efforts. Yellow Ribbon Report is being edited and the intent is to have it ready by July. Work is currently underway on the Lavender Ribbon Report and the White Ribbon Report. The White Ribbon Report should be ready by November for Symposium in the Sun. An update was also given on the Red Ribbon Report training.
- Chair Flynn reported that he spoke with Spencer and he is receptive to having the board assist with his recruitment & retention coordinator classes. Chair Flynn also asked the board how many of them will be at FRI in Charlotte and reviewed the proposed schedule. The board decided to have a booth in the IAFC Pavilion.
- Mrs. Lutz reported on the efforts of the National 5 grant and told the board that she is looking for SME's for the nationwide climate survey and in-person training.
- The board discussed NFPA committee appointments.

**Call with IAFC CEO/Executive Director Rob Brown**

The board spoke with IAFC CEO/Executive Director Rob Brown and congratulated him on his recent appointment to CEO/Executive Director. Chair Flynn said that the VCOS Board is here to assist the divisions, sections, and the association in moving forward. Chief Buckman briefed Rob on Symposium in the Sun.

**Chairs Report – Chair Flynn**

Chair Flynn said he plans to run again for Chair.

Looking for board members to take on the new member packet. Asked for volunteers to work on revising the New Board Member Packet and Chief Cowger volunteered.

Chair Flynn will respond to the letter from Paul Sterling asking for an endorsement. The VCOS Board does not endorse in IAFC elections.

### **Vice Chair Report – Chief Cowger**

Chief Cowger asked for board members to review the committee list and see if they are interested in any committees.

Ran the clergy proposal through the Go. No Go worksheet and recommended moving forward with the chaplain project. Chief Yancey will spreadsheet the chaplain project.

Chief Cowger said the grants management system needs to be looked at as some projects are being prioritized over others when everything needs to be on the same level.

### **Secretary/Treasurer's Report – Chief Windisch**

Chief Windisch reported the following financial information:

- \$216,000 in the VCOS General Fund as of 12/31/20
- \$262,000 in the Pierce Fund
- Total of about \$478,000

He is working to try and recover the \$17,800 that was made at Virtual Symposium.

### **Current Projects Report – Chief Cook**

Chief Cook gave an update on the Red Ribbon Report training. Anticipates that it will be back to them in the early Summer. Will send it to the VCOS Board before it goes live. Has had discussions with Spencer about involving the VCOS Board in the instructor process.

**Motion by Chief Rush and seconded by Chief Windisch to eliminate the existing transitioning course. Motion carried.**

### **Current Projects Report – Chief Rush**

Chief Rush agreed to stay on with the Communications Committee. Reported that the newsletter is out now. Would like to continue to incorporate the department profile and the board profile in the newsletter. Hopes to be able to focus on new ways to communicate with the section.

### **Current Projects Report – Chief Oettel**

Chief Oettel said that they need to take time to think about what they want the outcomes of the marketing plan to be, and they look at things in a closer-knit, tighter approach.

**Motion by Chief Cowger and seconded by Chief Rush to utilize Pierce's offer to assist with marketing and branding. Motion carried.**

Chief Windisch started the discussion about when the meeting with Pierce in Appleton, Wisconsin would occur. He will put together a draft logistics plan to share with the board for feedback.

### **Bylaws and Election Process – Chief Flynn**

Chief Flynn noted that the board needs to look at the bylaws and election process as they move into the future.

### **Strategic Direction Project – Chief Yancey**

Chief Yancey asked the partners in attendance to offer their feedback on the VCOS SWOT analysis.

The board discussed revising the mission statement to:

- To develop and enhance effective, professional leaders of the volunteer and combination fire service by providing tools, resources and representation to effectively lead their organizations.

Board decided to send the revised mission statement to Mike to look at.

Board discussed changing the logo tag to: VCOS developing and enhancing leaders.

The Board discussed the following goals:

High Priority Goals to be accomplished in one year (SMART)

No specific order

1. Establish an effective member engagement process by May 1, 2022 (new member packet, new member gathering at Sun, purposeful engagement such as board members get a notification when someone from their division joins VCOS, etc.) (better communications: rolling #4 into this bullet)
2. Establish a defined marketing plan for our brand and products. (Marketing Committee) (SMART)
3. Refresh our mission, vision and brand by November 2021.
4. Establish a member accepted/appreciated PUSH communications to communicate timely/relevant leadership information to our members.
5. Influence cultural (attitude) change of the IAFC through... (need to wordsmith this)

Chief Rush and Chief Oettel noted on communications that we need to be careful not to overload people with information. Suggested to pick one day a week to send out information.

Chair Flynn asked Chief Yancey to think about medium and low priority goals to discuss at the board meeting in May.

**Action Item: Chief Yancey will send out an email asking everyone for their input on what the medium and low priority goals should be.**

**Motion by Chief Cowger and seconded by Chief Rush to buy Ms. Jennifer Bragiel flowers for presenting at the meeting. Motion carried.**

### **Wrap-Up**

- Chief Cowger: Looking forward to future meetings.
- Mr. Beecher: Thanked the board for letting him participate.
- Chief Cook: Great seeing everyone and proud of the progress made this weekend.
- Chief Windisch: Moderating a June 23<sup>rd</sup> ISO mitigation event
- Chief Buckman: Discussed the Women in Fire Service digital book project and printing some copies of the book. Pierce has agreed to fund and market the book.
- Chief Flynn: Reported his department ISO rating improved. Thanked Ms. Kaitlin Lutz for her help this weekend.

**Motion by Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Cowger to spend up to \$1,000 of Pierce funds to print copies of the Women in Fire Service digital book. Motion carried.**

Meeting ended at 12:38 PM.