



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



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VCOS Board of Directors Meeting

**February 10-11, 2017
Houston, Texas**

MINUTES

Friday, February 10 (at Shell in Downtown Houston – 910 Louisiana Street)

Present: Chief Donna Black, Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Dan Eggleston, Chief Charles Flynn, Chief Randy Larson, Chief Fred Windisch

Absent: Chief Ed Rush, Chief James Seavey, Chief Timothy Wall

Guests: Mr. Jeff Siegrist, Mr. Joe Giorgi, Mr. Skip Gibson, Mr. Troy Markel, Mr. Ed Mann, Chief John Buckman, Ms. Gweneyette Broussard, Ms. Mary Tompkins

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen

The meeting started at 9:30am.

Introduction and Welcome of Guests – Chief Timothy Wall

Chief Wall was not able to make it to the meeting due to weather so he called in to start the meeting and say a few welcoming remarks. He thanked Shell for hosting the VCOS board meeting. He also stated that the May VCOS board meeting will be on Friday of Symposium in the West. He wished the board a successful meeting and said he would call back in later for the call with the IAFC Officers.

Chair's Report – Chief Flynn

Chief Flynn ran the meeting since Chief Wall could not make it.

Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Black to approve the minutes from the January board call. Motion carried.

CFSI is April 5-6. Wednesday afternoon is a VCOS/VWS presentation on Recruitment and Retention programs. Chief Wall might be at the NVFC meeting/dinner on Friday. Chiefs Eggleston, Black, and Catrambone expressed interest in attending CFSI. Mr. Gibson mentioned that ISO sometimes has extra seats at their table if needed. One idea was to have a VCOS board meeting at CFSI in the future if it is not too costly.

Chief Flynn went over some legislative updates regarding VRIPA and cancer issues. Overall, there is a lot of questions regarding the new administration and what their priorities will be.

Vice Chair's Report – Chief Flynn

Chief Flynn has been trying to touch base with Neal from Kidde to do another year of the Step Up and Stand Out campaign. He will let the board know when he has more information.

The Yellow Ribbon Report committee met in November and they have a draft that is being reviewed. A copy was given to each board member at the meeting. Each board member should review the document and send any edits/comments to Chiefs Flynn and Buckman. The draft is on a google docs site for comments. We need to really recognize Mike Macdonald for his work on this as he has done an excellent job. The goal is to have it ready for Symposium in the West.

Chief Flynn also submitted a written report on Helix and the NVFC SAFER grant, but there were no major updates to report.

International Director's Report – Chief Eggleston

Chief Eggleston assisted with the IAFC Ethics Committee in the rewrite of the IAFC Code of Ethics. He provided some background for the changes and the board was given a copy in their board packets.

There is an upcoming IAFC board meeting in Reno and there will be continued discussions with the Division and Section Workgroups. How can we better integrate sections and divisions? What is the role of Divisions and Sections? The VCOS board felt overall there should be better coordination between the Divisions and the IAFC. There should be more unity.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report – Chief Collins

Chief Collins included a financial report from 2016 and the budget for 2017 in the board packet.

He reviewed the 2016 budget actuals. The Symposium in the Sun profits are not shown in the interfund transfer line item yet. Staff hours have not been billed. There was a suggestion to show profit/loss each year as a means of comparison. Perhaps have an income statement and show restricted funds which is what organizational projects is so that is clearly delineated.

Pierce initiative funds include just BH&H and FROG. We maintain \$100K each year. There were some issues with the Symposium in the West financial reporting because some expenses for the 2017 Symposium in the West got charged to 2016. Staff is working to resolve this so it doesn't happen in the future again. Chief Windisch stated that the Pierce contribution will probably be even more next year.

Chief Collins reported that the budget is balanced for 2017 and was approved by the IAFC.

Updates from our Friends and Supporters

- Provident: They will sponsor the Buckman award again this year but would like a more formal process. Chief Collins said they could use the template that has been used for the Training Officer Award which has worked well.
- VFIS: They agree with Provident and would like a better process so we can get more applications.
- ISO: They have a new blue logo that should be used in marketing materials.
- Shell: Encouraged everyone to use their emergency response portal for training. What new courses should we add to the portal that would help the community? They are doing a video series about pipelines and what to do in emergencies. They encourage feedback on them. If there is a need for other videos, let them know. There will be about 7 new videos each year, but they want to tailor it to fire service needs. API pipeline trainings – they pay for people to come to that and hope VCOS can participate. There is a new DOT regulation that states that when an incident occurs, a pipeline operator has to deliver information to help respond to the incident and it must be timestamped. That information will likely be via email and they need to figure out who that information goes to. Chief Windisch stated that we are willing to help and continue collaboration.

Discussion and Action Items:

Symposium in the West - Chief Collins

The conference will be May 4-6 in Reno. Registration is at 20 as of 1/30 (not counting 10 National SAFER pilot department attendees). The brochure will be going out soon. Abbi is a new IAFC staff

member working on marketing for the conference. Thursday is opening ceremony. Friday is the all day workshop. Saturday is closing session. The board meeting will be Friday. Staff is reaching out to sponsors. We are trying to give sponsors more visibility at Symposium in the West. Dan Seidberg is helping with this again. The contract is being finalized for the next few years. Dates for future conferences are: May 3-5, 2018 & May 2-4, 2019 in Phoenix. It will be held at the Embassy Suites in Scottsdale.

Symposium in the Sun - Chief Windisch

The board was given the feedback from the Symposium in the Sun app. The contract for 2019-2021 has been signed. Future conference dates are:

- 2017 - Thurs. 11/9 – Sun. 11/12
- 2018 – Thurs. 11/8 – Sun. 11/11

2017 Update: The committee is starting to pick speakers now. They are trying to control speaker costs since they were higher last year. There is no pre-conference this year and rather the conference starts Thursday. They plan to spread out the VCOS business items over the 3 days so it isn't so much at one time. The hotel block will open mid-March. There was a suggestion to let sponsors know first about when the hotel room block opens.

Election – Chief Flynn

Candidates can submit their names to run in the VCOS board election from Feb 1 – Feb 28. Chief Florentino is chair of the committee and Chief Rush will assist him. The terms of office ending in 2017 are Chiefs Flynn, Collins, and Larson.

VCOS 2017 Booth Schedule (tentative)

- FDIC: April 24-29 in Indianapolis, IN
- Symposium in the West – May 4-6, Reno, NV
- New York Chiefs: June 14-17 in Verona, NY
- FRI: July 26-29 in Charlotte, NC
- Firehouse Expo: Oct. in Nashville, TN
- Symposium in the Sun: Nov 9-12 in Clearwater Beach, FL
- Others?

We need to get this list finalized and assess cost.

Exhibiting Task Force – Chiefs Seavey and Collins

This has been put on hold until Chief Seavey is feeling better.

Communications Committee – Chiefs Rush, Black, Crutcher, Larson

We need more membership engagement for articles. We could do an e-blast call for articles. The committee will have a conference call soon. Gweneyette could potentially do an article for the next newsletter. Chief Catrambone suggested to reach out to different departments to do a spotlight.

Leadership and Employee Collaboration Project (LEC) – Chief Larson and Chief Struble

Chief Struble submitted a written report. They formed a Tactical Committee which has conducted conference calls. They are aiming to get a toolkit on the website. Chief Chornock is helping with that. The board asked for a list of who is on the committee. Kelly sent the board the latest call minutes from Chief Struble. They will do pilot classes later this year.

Information Only Items:

Membership Report – Chief Wall

- VCOS membership numbers as of January 2017: 2,433 total members, 1903 regular members, 75 associate members, 65 departmental members, 145 affiliate members, 16 past president members, 224 life members, 5 electronic members
- VCOS worked with IAFC membership for a free section membership promotion in January

- Chief Jason Catrambone will work with IAFC Membership staff to send letters to members whose membership has lapsed to get them back.

Additional Submitted Reports

- NACO – Chief Singer (pgs. 21-22)
- Leading the Transition – Chief Cheves (pg. 23)
- NFPA 1720 – Chief Render (pgs. 24-26) Incorporate into ISO rating? Skip will bring it up again.
- National Firefighter Near Miss Program & Insight 360 Event Reporting Tool – Chief Dan Kerrigan and John Russ (pgs. 27-28)
- Workplace Bullying/Harassment/Violence Prevention Taskforce – Chief Larson (pg. 29)
- You and ISO – Chief Curl (pg. 30)
- Homeland Security Committee - Chief Richards (pg. 31)
- Beyond Hoses and Helmets – Chief Render (pg. 32)
- Commission on Professional Credentialing - Chief Christopoulos (pg. 33)
- Women Fire Chiefs Council – Chief Black (pgs. 34-35)
- Council for Future Volunteer Firefighters – IAFC National SAFER – Chief Black (pg. 36)
- FRI Planning Committee – Chief Black (pg. 37)
- Get Checked Campaign – Chief Black (pg. 38)
- EMS Modernization Project – Chief Hughes (pg. 39)

There was some discussion on the submitted reports. Does BH&H need a name change? We need to remarket it since we are not getting as many requests. We could change the host requirements. Maybe do a deposit that is fully refundable. Does the course need an overhaul? We should ask Chief Render what he needs from us. Perhaps bring everyone together (the course managers and/or committees/instructors) and see what they think we should do. Should we combine some courses or restructure them? It may be valuable to bring some new people in and not the same people or they will create the same thing. Bring them in on Wednesday of Symposium in the Sun or sometime during West? Powerpoints are not the latest way for effective adult learning. Chief Windisch will get a call with the program leaders on this. Mr. Skip Gibson suggested looking at You and ISO too to revamp it.

New Business

- Need a FLSA/Government Regulators Toolkit Committee – Mr. Garen Dodge is willing to work on it. Chief Windisch talked to him and is waiting on IAFC staff to move forward with him. Chief Wall reached out to Curt Varone to participate. Several other people are interested and we will work to solidify the committee over the next few weeks.
- ALERT project (pg. 40). Looking to schedule a class in the following states:
 - West Virginia
 - North Dakota – Chief Catrambone reported that the state has been flooded for classes. It will be hard to get people to come and undo what has been done in the past.
 - South Carolina
 - Montana
 - Florida
- VCOS 25th anniversary - It is 2 years away (2019). The board agreed to do nothing too big. Instead put out a great product/resource versus a celebration. Ms. Broussard from Shell said they would be willing to help with a 25th celebration. It would be easier to do it not at FRI since there would be more options. Perhaps we could tie it into Symposium in the West or Sun.
- National Summit in 2018 working with the IAFC National SAFER grant
- Bullying survey – Chief Larson
 - Need to get a survey out to more volunteer/combo folks. The board agrees and we will put it in the next Chair's Update.
- Fire-Rescue International – July 26-29 in Charlotte, NC. Annual meeting on Thursday from 1:30-3pm? There are many volunteer/combo departments in NC so might we should do a meet and greet that is more social and networking oriented? Hospitality room instead to get more people engaged? Bring Cathy Feyh to talk to people about becoming members. Chiefs Black, Catrambone Collins, and Eggleston will look at this.

- Appoint award committees: Have some of the same committee members for consistency and bring in other members to get involved? Chief Flynn will coordinate. There was a suggestion to open scholarships to non-members and give them a free IAFC membership to get them involved.
 - Buckman Award (Provident)
 - Recruitment and Retention/Injury-Illness Prevention Awards (VFIS)
 - Training Officer Award (TargetSolutions) – TargetSolutions wants to do a webinar again in April and we need a topic. Send any topics to Chief Collins.
 - Emerging Leadership Scholarship (Gasaway Consulting)
 - Symposium Scholarships - maybe do one in Phoenix for Symposium in the West?
 - FRI Scholarships

Old Business

- Symposium Committees Succession planning (Sun and West) – Sliding some new people in to get involved.
- VISION project – The IAFC website was recently redone and staff is planning to better organize the volunteer resources and use VISION as a framework. The VISION project will be discussed during tomorrow’s meeting to see where it falls in terms on priorities. We had many sponsors that invested in it, but it hasn’t seemed to take off.
- United in Service/Diversity Report
 - Request from Chief Olsson - Chief Olsson wants it and asked VCOS for it. However, IAFC owns it. Chief Wall will be contacting Chief Olsson to get more specifics on what she is looking for.
 - Diversity poster with guidance – Chiefs Wall and Fonseca have talked about this. The VCOS board wants a better understanding of VCOS’ role in this and wants to make sure we have the ability to review and approve it. The VCOS executive committee will talk to Chief Wall about this. Chief Black believes Chief Fonseca will be open to VCOS feedback on the poster. There was an initial motion that was pulled stating that the VCOS has the right to approve or disapprove the poster. Instead, the board agreed the executive committee would talk to Chief Wall to get clarification first.

Roundtable

Black: An invitation went out to 5 bugle women chiefs for the Women Fire Chiefs Council meeting at FRM. They are bringing out 2 speakers and having a discussion/forum. Chief Black also mentioned the new iDELP program.

Catrambone: Someone in his department didn’t get into the FESDI program because it appeared he wouldn’t be a chief soon based on his current position. But in volunteer/combo departments that transition could happen soon. The program should consider that.

Gibson: He submitted the Symposium in the West sponsorship paperwork just now.

Windisch: He is excited to have the VCOS board in Houston and let him know if you need anything while here.

Siegrist: Appreciates being here and included in the meeting.

Eggleston: Albemarle County Fire Rescue contracted with the IAFC to help with marketing for ACFR’s SAFER recruitment and retention grant. Chief Steubing in Canada talked with Chief Eggleston about having a board meeting in Canada next February. Maybe we could have a 2-day meeting/conference with the Canadian group?

Markel: He is glad to be here and for the opportunity to participate.

Giorgi: Same comments as Mr. Markel

Buckman: VCOS should be careful in overcommitting and working on too many projects. What is the desired outcome? What is ROI? We need to take a hard look at our priorities. We are at a crossroads. Do we want to enhance our position or stay stagnant?

Broussard: Strategic plans are very important for the success of an organization. What do we want to do in 3 years, 5 years? What CAN get done? Then work to prioritize items. What will really make a difference?

Flynn: We need to look at the big picture and not duplicate or re-invent. We should continue to work with others. We only have one board meeting on the road now that isn't tied to a conference. That makes it hard to meet with different departments. How do we make our meetings more effective?

Call with IAFC Officers

Chief Wall started the call with the IAFC officers. He thanked IAFC staff that work with VCOS and the CT program.

Chief Sinclair stated they had an executive committee meeting this week and a board call. The board is looking forward to the March board meeting on the governance issue. A bylaw change was recently submitted about what to do when an officer is incapacitated and unable to fulfill their duties. There are still many discussions among EFO and COS for permanent IAFC board seats. The COS did submit a bylaws change to have a permanent seat on the board. Those are going to the CBR committee. The IAFC board has taken no action until the CBR committee does. Thanks to Chief Black for stepping up to lead the WFCC. Thanks to Chief Jenkins for attending the WFCC and IDELP meeting.

Chief Jenkins asked about how the first VCOS Symposium in the West went. The VCOS board reported it was very successful and had about 130 attendees. The goal had been 100 attendees. Sponsorships were exceeded. VCOS made money on the first year and the goal was to breakeven. The conference is going back to Reno May 4-6 this year. The brochure is going out soon. We are on pace with registration for this year. We are in the process of signing a contract for 2018 and 2019 in Phoenix.

Chief Curmode had nothing to add.

Mr. Mark Light stated that there is no update on the U.S. Fire Administrator yet. Dr. Oneal is the acting administrator right now. It may be until May until they fill the FEMA administrator position. The U.S. Fire Administrator would probably be a few months later. Ken LaSala is trying to get a meeting with Secretary Kelly of DHS. The lawsuit that Mr. Light mentioned in November should be over now. We agreed to a technical violation of the law and were told to make sure to not do it again. The IAFC building is for sale. We outgrew the current building and are looking to lease space in the near future.

Chief Carrizzo: Chief Collins does a great job as secretary/treasurer. He asks good questions to make sure everything is accurate. ESCI and Fields Consulting merged which doubled our investment which is good for the IAFC.

The call with the IAFC officers concluded and Chiefs Wall and Rush stayed on the call.

Additional Comments

Chief Rush provided a short update since he wasn't able to attend in-person due to snow. He met with FASNY to see how VCOS can better work with them. Mr. John D'Alessandro wants to get involved with the committee. Joelle's can't help with the next newsletter since she is traveling. Chief Rush's wife is an editor and can help. Should VCOS do something similar to the NVFC coffee promotion via social media? They received 200 applications for the contest.

Chief Wall: VCOS sent gift cards to IAFC conferences staff for their work on Symposium in the Sun. Ms. Sara Stehle sent a thank you note. Chief Wall received an email from Chief Seavey that he wasn't

coming for health reasons. A card was sent around for the board to sign. Chief Flynn told Chief Wall that the board agreed to have the VCOS annual meeting at FRI at the same time as last year (Thursday from 1:30-3pm). He also mentioned maybe doing a meet and greet at FRI. Chief Wall stated he received a call from Chief jona olsson about the United in Service Report and he will touch base with her again to find out specifically what she is looking for. Chief Wall stated that IAFC owns it based on some recent conversations he had. The VCOS executive committee will discuss this on their next call.

Future of VCOS - Chief Buckman

Since there was additional time before the group dinner, Chief Buckman started the Future of the VCOS part of the agenda.

Markel: VFIS goes through this exercise every year and he applauds VCOS for doing this. Narrow it down to 3-4 things you are good at and which will give you an impactful ROI. One goal should be to grow membership. Committee work needs to be committee work and not additional board work. The NFFF board meeting is 5 hours not 2 days. The VCOS strategic plan is too long.

Windisch: He agrees that the strategic plan is too long. He thinks the VCOS mission is good.

Siegrist: He is consistently impressed by the amount and quality of the VCOS work, but advised that you can't take it all on. If you are trying to do too many things, then you won't do it all well. He believes in strategic planning. There should be short-term and long-term goals which should only be a page or 2. The mission and goals should be on one page.

Chief Buckman asked if VCOS wants to change? Do we want to modify our direction? Are we evolving? Do we want to evolve?

The VCOS board asked Chief Buckman what he wanted as the outcome of this. Based on conversations with Chief Wall, he will create a 1-page document on the future direction of VCOS which will be a starting point for the strategic plan. It will be no longer than 15-20 bullets.

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

The meeting ended 4:17pm.

Saturday, February 11 (at Ponderosa FD)

The meeting started at 9:10am.

Chairman's Agenda Overview and Firehouse Tour

Chief Windisch gave an overview of his department.

The Yellow Ribbon Report draft looks really good. The next step is to finish editing and launch it at Symposium in the West. The position statement will go to the IAFC board for review soon. There is some discussion on the title of the report still.

Cancer Initiatives – Chiefs Seavey, Eggleston, Buckman

The VCOS executive board will discuss the appointment of Chief Robert Logan to the cancer projects. What should the cancer projects accomplish? The committee needs to draft a charter. They should talk to NFFF to determine what VCOS' role/lane is. There is confusion on the various projects and organizations involved. The NFFF is doing policy and research. FCSN supports firefighters and families and provides information on how to limit exposures. This is a more grassroots effort while NFFF is higher level. FCSN does come to the NFFF meetings. The NFFF is trying to be the point of contact for all groups. The IAFF is doing a lot of research too. The NFFF created an alliance to bring the different parties together. What should our role be? VCOS can focus more on small departments. How do you change culture? That is where we are struggling.

NFFF is the leader of the cancer efforts right now and we have to decide how we work into the system. Maybe ask NFFF what we as VCOS can do and define "our lane."

920 FDNY 9/11 responders have stage 3 or 4 cancer. 20 died in 2016.

Should we do some type of pledge like the seat belt pledge?

Action item: Reach out to NFFF to establish our lane. Write a business plan of what we are looking to do.

What do we need? Model policies with alternatives. September 6-8 there is a cancer symposium in Phoenix. Washington state already has a video on some of this. Push that to membership. Educate people on grant opportunities. Work with SHS and see what they are doing.

Future of VCOS and Succession Planning

Before this part of the agenda began, a volunteer from Ponderosa led an injury prevention discussion to help with some research he is doing.

The goal of the Future of VCOS discussion is to get five action items to prioritize.

What are the tangible benefits? How do we measure success?

What should we be doing in the future?

We need better tracking of people interested in helping so we can get more members involved.

Is it time to do another member survey? The last one was done in 2014/2015.

The board agreed to dive deeper into a few areas: Tangible benefits of VCOS, Membership, Funding, and Member Involvement. Everyone was divided into groups.

Groups:

Tangible Benefits

- Member discount to conferences
- Ribbon reports
- Webinars
- Website
- Social media
- Newsletter
- Awards, scholarships
- KnowledgeNet
- Peer support, mentor contact
- State VCOS advocates
- Chief in trouble

Is this enough?

Membership

- Look at membership price and structure. Some small departments can't afford current membership rates.
- Targeted recruitment drive
- Manage membership – more personable contact – make a committee with reps from different divisions
- Membership deals at education classes
- Reach out to state chiefs associations, do a bundle package with other groups
- Welcome packet for new members – tailored for their department
- Don't forget we need to retain our members
- Bring in a new member for a discount
- What is our retention rate?
- Look at IAFC members that aren't VCOS members.
- Outreach to small rural departments and throughout country

Member Involvement

- Change our marketing - Re-brand ourselves
- Need better project management
- Use communications more effectively to ask for help. Simple form to help vet the person. Assign someone to manage the process
- Ask members for Symposium topics, articles, etc.
- Highlight different departments
- Roles, responsibilities, deadlines, charter, guidelines for committees

Funding

- Contributors
 - Property and casualty insurance, All State, AIG, etc.
 - Restoration companies
 - Gear extraction, cleaning/washing companies
 - Non-industry partners – Walmart, Target, etc.
- Products
 - Franchising educational programs to state fire academies, etc.
 - Make ribbon reports and VCOS resources members only. Sell to non-members
 - Workshops based on ribbon reports
 - Increase Symposium in the Sun fees
 - Bring in vendors for Symposium in the West

Another priority: Revamp education, need better processes (new committee, funding, etc.)

Do we need an outside consultant? Is it time to have an executive director? Pay people to do follow-up calls? Sometimes you need to spend more money to get results.

What should we stop doing?

- VISION
- Exhibiting?
- Change how we manage partner relationships?
- Need better management of educational classes. Franchise model to state training and have them deliver it?
- Modify approach to board meetings – need to be action-oriented and use a consent agenda. Any new initiative is in the executive summary. Chief Collins will write up the idea. Use IAFC’s board agenda as the template. We could use the IAFC’s Webex for VCOS monthly calls. Open up board meeting to membership during the year? Do we have to conduct an annual meeting at FRI?
- Term limits? All board or just executive board?

What gives our membership the biggest ROI?

- Ribbon reports
- Education
- Up to date on hot topics
- Perspective of volunteer/combinaton departments is present at the table
- Our voice
- Networking

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

Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Windisch to come out of Executive Session. Motion carried.

Chief Flynn will talk to Chief Wall about the discussion about the United in Service Report. He will ask that Chief Wall get more information from Chief Olsson and then report back to the VCOS board with that information.

There was a suggestion to shorten the board meeting in Reno so that the business meeting is only 1-2 hours followed by succession planning and then a follow-up on the Future of VCOS discussion. The executive committee will design the consent agenda.

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

The meeting ended at 1:58pm. The next call is 3/8 at 4pm ET.