



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

May 3, 2019
Phoenix, Arizona

MINUTES

Friday, May 3 (at Embassy Suites by Hilton Phoenix-Scottsdale at 4415 E Paradise Pkwy S, Phoenix, Arizona)

Present: Chair Chuck Flynn, Chief Donna Black, Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Timothy Wall, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Jim Cook, Chief Rich Cowger, Chief Ron Oettel, Chief Ed Rush

Guests: Chief Richard Carrizzo, Mr. Mark Light, Chief John Sinclair, Mr. Jeff Siegrist, Mr. Ed Mann, Mr. Barry Balliett, Mr. Joe Giorgi, Chief John M. Buckman

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen, Ms. Jennifer Bragiel Cozad, Ms. Sara Stehle, Ms. Kaitlin Lutz

The meeting started at 12:23 pm.

Introduction, Pledge of Allegiance and Welcome of Guests – Chair Flynn

Chair Flynn welcomed the board and guests to the meeting. He asked everyone to introduce themselves.

IAFC Update – Mr. Mark Light and Chief Carrizzo

An update on the legal case with Chief Kurmode and the financial impact to the IAFC was provided. The case is closed, and the IAFC is working with their insurance to see if any money attributed to the case can be reimbursed.

An update on the election process was provided. The new board will take office at FRI in Atlanta. All new board members have two dates they must be a fire chief. This year the issue, is if Chief Drozd will be a fire chief by the August date. The Election Committee is looking into the situation on what happens, if he is not a fire chief.

Mr. Light provided an update on the IAFC. It has excellent education programs that have been developed and are in the process of being developed. The organization has several programs that are doing amazing. FRI will be in Atlanta this year, then it will be in Phoenix in 2020. The IAFC had a consultant come in to assist with reimagining FRI. The plan is very progressive and may make some people nervous, but we believe it will make FRI even better. The goal with the changes is to reach adult learners in the best possible way. The changes will start in Phoenix.

The IAFC has been in the new office for about 13 months. During this time, the IAFC has had more members stop by and attend events than in our entire tenure at the old location. It has been great to see members embrace it.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda was reviewed.

- IAFC Terrorism & Homeland Security Committee – Chief Ed Richards
- Beyond Hoses and Helmets – Chief Greg Render
- Member and Leadership Collaboration (MLC) – Peter Struble
- Communications Committee – Chief Ed Rush
- You and ISO – Chief Larry Curl

Motion by Chief Catrambone and seconded by Chief Rush to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

VWS Update – Ms. Kelly Ameen and Ms. Kaitlin Lutz

Ms. Ameen provided an update on the National 2's Volunteer and Administrative Leadership (VALS) program, state efforts, Chief 101 and the upcoming courses from Tennessee and North Carolina.

Ms. Lutz updated the board on National 3. The program is working on selecting 6 pilots to work with for the remainder of the grant. The council is in the process of reviewing the applications and interview findings to select the final 6. The pilots will be required to do a climate survey. The council has VCOS, iDELP and WCC members along with representatives from several other organizations.

There was discussion on VCOS's partnership with VWS.

Chair's Report – Chief Flynn

Chief Flynn reviewed the membership numbers provided to the VCOS board.

Project Management Group – Chief Black and Chief Cowger

The group found a project manager to help put together a template for project management. The four groups created with Ms. Kelly Walsh remain a critical part of this project. The key will be thinking about when and how the VCOS markets themselves and projects. The goal is to establish a way to be clearer about projects, including what is needed, expectations, budget, monitoring and staff time. The next step for the group is to create the template. They will then send it for input and edits. The goal is to have it ready for board approval for FRI.

International Director Report – Chief Black

Women Chiefs Council has narrowed their focus. They will be meeting once a year. The goal is for this meeting to take place the Wednesday before FRI. WCC has also created a mentoring version of Match.com on KnowledgeNet. There are icons identifying mentors and a form to be filled out to connect mentees to mentors.

Financials – Chief Windisch

Chief Windisch informed the board that the VCOS lost money in the general fund in 2018. He emphasized the IAFC staff does great work, but the board needs to limit their reliance on the staff as the budget cannot afford large amounts of staff time.

A discussion took place on how to generate more revenue to cover additional staff hours. It was emphasized that reducing staff time would reduce the ability of the section to develop and produce key resources for the volunteer and combination fire service. Several ideas were recommended on how to continue to produce without limiting the budget, including changing how staff time is charged internally with the IAFC, charging for VCOS resources, bringing in new sponsors, reducing other costs. The consensus was that more revenue needed to be developed to allow the section to continue to be active and provide it the ability to provide key resources for volunteer and combination departments.

Symposium in the West – Chief Collins and Ms. Sara Stehle

Symposium in the West 2019 saw an increase in sponsorship, although the number of paid attendees was down from last year. The symposium will lose money this year.

It was emphasized that the symposium had a huge impact on attendees and the region, even if it did not make money. It was recommended that the expected loss should be budgeted for in the future. It was also recommended to partner with other conferences, to possibly increase attendance and provide more value to vendors. Everyone emphasized the high quality and value of the symposium for attendees.

The selection process for Minneapolis, Minnesota for 2020 and 2021 was discussed. A lot of data points were used in its selection; the committee also considered the ease of travel to the location.

The board agreed to re-evaluate the symposium in 2020.

Symposium in the Sun – Chief Windisch and Ms. Stehle

Ms. Stehle provided an update on Symposium in the Sun 2019. The main hotel is not sold out and registration numbers are very strong so far. She reminded the board that costs are rising at the hotel and a gallon of coffee cost \$98. The VCOS is booked at the same hotel for Symposium in the Sun until 2020. Ms. Stehle has started conversations with them for a new contract but wanted to confirm the VCOS's plans for the location for the future before moving forward. A decision will be needed by the end of the year.

FRI – Chief Flynn

Chief Flynn provided an FRI 2019 review and update. He reminded the VCOS Board about the Annual Meeting. He informed the board that there will be two Learning Labs and that Chief Rush is working on the booth schedule.

Motion Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Catrambone to make a \$200 donation to the IAFC Foundation in President's honor. Motion carried.

Education Plan – Chief Buckman

Chief Buckman emphasized that if the VCOS wants to keep providing educational courses and developing new products more money is needed. He recommended the VCOS stops targeting local departments, as they lack the ability to market and fund the course.

Chief Buckman reviewed several recommendations developed during his meeting with Ms. Bragiel Cozad at the IAFC on how to spread the VCOS's education. Some of them involved creating a professional qualification standard for leaders of volunteers, mandatory chief education courses for volunteers at the state level, online courses for distance learners, having state approved training instructors deliver courses, and modifying the pricing for the courses.

A discussion on the costs to hold a course and the ways to address them took place. This included discussion on the value of an education course and the prices charged by others for the offering. Many argued that the courses should be offered regionally and that there should be a clear fee or cost associated with it, whether it is paid by the host or the attendee. It was raised that the key for getting attendees is making it justifiable to departments' boards or commissions. Developing accredited volunteer fire leader credentials will result in high demand from city managers, as they place a high value on credentials.

Action Item: Chief Buckman to take input from the discussion and create a plan.

It was recommended Chief Buckman work with VWS in the creation of his plan.

A discussion on the instructor honorarium occurred. After reviewing the funding it was found that the recent increase would be unsustainable into the future.

Motion Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Catrambone to make the instructor honorarium \$250 per day not to exceed \$750 per course effective immediately, and to update the form to include descriptions.

Discussion on the motion. A friendly amendment was proposed.

Amended Motion Chief Windisch and approved by Chief Catrambone to make the instructor \$250 per day not to exceed \$750 per course per instructor, the form is to include description of charge as well as the option to not accept the honorarium, this will be effective now for all courses. Motion carried with 2 abstentions.

Scholarships and Awards

The opening of scholarships and awards was discussed.

FRI Meet and Greet – Chief Black and Chief Cowger

Chief Black and Chief Cowger are working with Ms. Leslie Distler to hopefully get a sponsor.

Action Item: If no sponsor is secured, the section will not do the Meet and Greet.

Finance Group – Chief Rush

The group had met and discussed some ideas. They are trying to avoid impacting the members. The group keeps coming back to looking for new sources and finding new sponsors for programs. The process of finding new sponsors was discussed. Potential future partners were discussed. It was agreed to keep Ms. Distler involved in the process to advise and guide the board.

Friends and Supporters Update

Mr. Siegrist thanked the board for letting them be a part of the meeting. He emphasized that they have a lot of big decisions to make, but they are not alone.

Mr. Giorgio thanked the board on behalf of Dr. Jenaway and Mr. Markle for involving them. He sympathized about the attendee numbers for Symposium in the West and reassured that it was not due to lack of effort. He congratulated them on the excellent content and the high value of the symposium.

Chief Flynn thanked both organizations for their guidance and congratulated VFIS on their 50th anniversary.

New Business:

- EMS Modernization Project

Motion Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Collins to remove the VCOS representative from the EMS Modernization Project. Motion Carried with 1 opposition.

Discussion on the motion. It was agreed of the project began to be active, a representative could be reassigned.

- Leading the Transition
 - It was emphasized that the class has a lot of potential.
 - There was concern about the course asking for more money, when it is not fully spending its current budgeted money.
 - There was concern raised about the course being out of date. The board discussed, the pros and cons of continuing to run the course in its current state.

Motion Chief Black and seconded by Chief Cook to discontinue the Leading the Transition Course. Motion rescinded following discussion.

Motion Chief Black and seconded by Chief Cook to stop offering the Leading the Transition Course until it has been rewritten. Motion Carried.

Discussion on the motion, emphasized that this course will be revamped.

- There was an agreement that this course should be a facilitation.
 - It was emphasized the importance to ensure the new version will not be in competition with ESCI.

Old Business:

- VCOS Booth
 - It has stalled with Mr. Seidberg and Mr. Beecher
 - The funds were budgeted many budget cycles ago, and are not in the current budget.

- 25th Anniversary
 - Challenge Coin
 - Getting together this week to finalize some things about the coin, meeting with marketing on the logos and coloring for the design.
 - Goal is to get them done by the end of this month.

Motion Chief Yancey and seconded by Chief Collins to empower the VCOS Executive Committee to approve the pricing and number of coins. Motion carried.

Discussion on the motion recommended approximately 1,500 coins and finding a sponsor for the coins.

- Education Giveaway
 - The board is still waiting to hear back from Shell on their support, so the program was not launched at Symposium in the West
 - Ms. Bragiel Cozad inquired if given the cost of the program this was something the board wanted to continue pursuing.
 - The board also discussed changing the layout of the giveaway to give them more control over the class offering.
 - One recommendation was to select 4 locations to hold the class make it free for VCOS members to attend, and charge non-members to mitigate some of the costs.
 - The board discussed the potential impact and value of the giveaway versus the cost.

Action Item: Move forward with the Education Giveaway only if Shell decides to sponsor the program.

Roundtable and Announcements:

Many individuals present expressed their gratitude and appreciation, while congratulating the VCOS on a content rich and high-quality Symposium in the West.

Chief Wall: Forwarded everyone an email from MS. Brandon Allen summarizing the CFSI visit. I didn't realize the opportunities through USDA and DOL; would like them to have a booth or do a TedTalk at Symposium in the Sun. We met with Senator Toomey and encouraged him to join the Fire Caucus. We tried to get an IRS meeting, but they are located in New Jersey. The meetings were very beneficial even though expensive. For Fire Chief of the Year, I have a volunteer chief for nomination Pete Tick from a rural Connecticut fire department. I will get the information and send it to everyone.

Chief Rush: Career Chief of the Year can be of a combination department, right? Is there anyone VWS would recommend?

Ms. Ameen: We will have to think about it and get back to you.

Chief Wall: I attended the NVFC Meeting for the VCOS. I thanked them on behalf of the VCOS. They have a summit in Portland in June, and I will be representing the VCOS at it. I gave a Lavender Ribbon Report presentation in New England.

Chief Rush: I was at the NVFC meeting and went into the recruitment and retention meeting. Something came up as a potential recruitment tool for the Spanish community. Someone recommended English language courses at the fire station. It would focus more on emergency services English that is important for communication during emergencies. This

allows for the ability to recruit potential members. It could be a strong potential program with minimal costs.

Chief Black: During one of our CFSI meetings we discussed improper data, this needs to be followed up on.

Chief Oettel: Had a great 2 days in DC. I am getting together with Senator Toomey's representative in Pennsylvania this is a great way to get things moving forward.

Chief Cowger: The rural development representatives from the USDA have already reached out to me.

Chief Yancey: The New and Interim Chiefs Guidance is about to be done. The title is *You're the fire chief, Now What?*, it is about 40 pages. We are down to the IAFC copy editors. We hope to have it to the IAFC Board for their June meeting. EFO has been a partner in this and really helped contribute to it. My hope is to have a decent bound copy like the FLSA Guide.

Chief Flynn: We will do like we did for the POV.

Chief Yancey: In Illinois, we have a significant issue on part time firefighters. Their pension will be contributed to their full-time place of employment due to cancer. There is an exposure at their part-time job, so the thought is that job should contribute back to their full-time place of employment. It doesn't end up as a greater benefit for the firefighter. We have a lot of questions right now and have been bringing forward the bright-line test. It is being pushed by the IAFF. Be prepared for this in your state as well. We reached out to IAFC's Government Relations and were told it is a state thing. They are aware and are monitoring it.

Chief Catrambone: I am looking for an Assistant Chief.

Chief Flynn: We have a letter from Chief Black seeking the VCOS Board's endorsement. I will send you the letter.

Motion Chief Catrambone and seconded by Chief Cowger for the VCOS Board to endorse Chief Black's candidacy for 2nd Vice President in 2020 and support her financially the same amount as was provided for Chief Eggleston's candidacy. Motion carried, one abstention.

Chief Black: Thank you so much for your endorsement. You can see my position on my website, ChiefDonnaBlack.com. The main thing is sustainability.

Chief Flynn: I have received a letter from the EMA, hosting a roundtable discussion. I would like to send someone, as I can't attend. Please reach out to me if anybody has an interest in talking about education development. Planning on sending Chief Cook due to him being local, and to reduce costs for the meeting. He needs to check his availability. We are open to sending someone else if they have an interest.

Chief Wall: If Chief Cook is unable to attend, maybe we can send someone else nearby.

Chief Flynn: Yes, perhaps Chief Oettel or someone else nearby.

Chief Collins: We need some people to introduce presenters tomorrow.

Chief Buckman: The National Fire Academy has 3 board positions open. They just sent a notice out, if we know somebody really into education. It will be very competitive.

Ms. Bragiel Cozad: We had been looking into utilizing a communication and project management system, similar to Slack. The IAFC has an option that would be free for the section, called Microsoft Teams. We will be moving away from WebEx and are encouraged to use this moving forward. I can set up a board group, so we can share files, hold discussion and more.

Action Item: Ms. Bragiel Cozad to move forward with setting up Teams, and to begin using it for the monthly teleconference calls.

Motion Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Cook to adjourn. Motion Carried.

The meeting adjourned May 3, 2019 at 5:02pm. The next call is 6/12 at 4pm ET.