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VCOS Board Meeting Clearwater Beach Hilton Clearwater, FL 12 November 2025

Participants:

VCOS Board Members Present:

Chief Rich Cowger, Chair
Chief Al Yancey, Vice Chair
Chief Shawn P. Stokes, Secretary/Treasurer
Chief Jason Catrambone, International Director
Chief Fred Windisch, Director at Large
Chief Spencer Cheatham, Director at Large
Chief Jason Caughey, Director at Large
Chief Tim Sendelbach, Director at Large
Chief Kevin Cooney, Director at Large
Chief Jordan Cramer, Director at Large

VCOS Board Members Not Present:

IAFC Guests/Partners/Staff:

Chief John M. Buckman III
Mr. Scott Beecher
Mr. Matt Shronts, VFIS
Ms. Mikel Robinson
Mr. Kevin McGee, IAFC Liaison
Mr. Ken LaSala, IAFC Government Relations and Policy Director (*via MS Teams*)

Call to Order

Chief Cowger chaired the meeting. A roll call was taken, and a quorum was present. The meeting came to order at 0905 hrs ET, 12 November 2025.

Approval of 14 October 2025 Minutes

Chief Rich Cowger, Chair

MOTION: 12 November 2025-01

Motion made and seconded to approve the October 14, 2025 Board meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Stokes/Caughey

Chair Report

Chief Rich Cowger

Chief Cowger informed the Board that Chief Eggleston is the current NACo representative. Chief Cowger initiated a discussion on how the position will be maintained as Chief Eggleston is retiring from his fire department. After consideration of the value of NACo engagement and the options for NACo representation the following motion was offered.

MOTION: 12 November 2025-02

Motion made and seconded that a Board position will be required to serve as the representative to NACo and nominate Chief Shawn Stokes to serve as the IAFC NACo representative. Motion carried.

Sendelbach/Catrambone

Chief Cowger informed the Board that the 2025 scholarship and award winners will be presented at Symposium in the Sun.

Vice Chair Report

Chief Yancey

Chief Yancey provided a Health, Wellness and Safety Committee update.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

Chief Shawn Stokes

Chief Stokes reported that he is conducting an analysis of membership trends from a 10-year period and is working with the Membership Department staff to obtain the data. Chief Stokes is also communicating with Finance Department staff about SITS profits.

Chief Stokes requested any input from the Board for potential bylaws changes. The deadline to submit changes to the Constitutions, Bylaws and Resolutions Committee is February 1, 2026. Please submit any input for consideration as soon as possible.

International Director Report

Chief Jason Catrambone

Chief Catrambone provided an update on the CEO/Executive Director selection process and the remaining steps for appointment.

An IAFC Board meeting is scheduled for December and a possible meeting in January if decisions are needed on the CEO/Executive Director selection process.

Chief Catrambone informed the Board that the IAFC Board has new members

representing Southwestern Division, New England Division and Western Division.

Legislative Update

Mr. Ken LaSala

Ken LaSala presented a review from the IAFC FEMA Task Group and overview of the next steps in the process. Ken provided a status report on the federal closure and reopening of the government as well as the actions that the IAFC has taken in collaboration with the IAFC. Mr. LaSala discussed the Wildland Fire Service implementation plan. He also provided a congressional legislative update. Finally, Mr. LaSala briefed the Board on the Senate Subcommittee hearing on the "Fire Apparatus Crisis" and the role the IAFC played, recognizing Mr. Beecher for his contribution to the IAFC congressional testimony that was submitted.

C2C

Chief Tim Sendelbach

Chief Sendelbach provided a status report on the C2C proposal. After further Board discussions Chief Sendelbach recommended that the focus of C2C should be as an advisory role to department chiefs who need such support rather than as a consulting engagement.

Education Coordinator Report

Chief John Buckman III

Chief Buckman reported that Symposium in the Sun is over sold even with 12 cancellations, and that there is a companion registration this year. The cruise dinner event is sold out and a profit is expected. In addition, a small number of fire service people might register at the counter. Exhibitors are also sold out.

The hotel contract is good through 2027. The SITS venue committee is actively evaluating several possible new locations that could allow conference expansion without exceeding the more intimate conference concept that attendees value.

Chief Buckman reported that a cost structure for course delivery is under development that will be brought back to the Board.

Chief Buckman informed the Board that 10 cohort participants successfully completed the Critical Thinking Academy pilot. The pilot was successful with a lot of student and faculty feedback that will contribute to curriculum development updates.

MOTION: 12 November 2025-03

Motion made and seconded to approve funding totaling \$13,150 for a consultant to perform curriculum development as presented in a proposal presented to the Board. Motion carried.

Cramer/Yancey

Sponsorship and Partnership Committee Report

Chief Jason Caughey

Chief Caughey requested to send back comments from the Sponsorship and Partnership document he sent by email so that he can present a final document for approval at the December 2025 Board meeting.

Legacy Partners Update

Mr. Scott Beecher informed the Board that he was appointed as Emergency Vehicle Maintenance Section ad-hoc FAMA Representative Board member. Mr. Beecher provided a status report of the Emergency Vehicle Supply and Demand white paper being produced by a cross functional task group under EVMS. Mr. Beecher also expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to support VCOS.

Mr. Matt Shrouts informed the Board that Vector Solutions is pleased to support the on-line curriculum for Critical Thinking program material. He also stated that Vector Solutions is expecting a very busy 2026.

Strategic Plan Update

Chief Cheatham

Chief Cheatham discussed setting subgoals for the Strategic Plan. However, Chief Cheatham cautioned the Board about the risk of over committing based on the limited capacity to complete the tasks.

VCOS Staff Support Report

Ms. Mikel Robinson

Mikel reported on the preparations for the Symposium in the Sun to include registration and tracking scanners. Mikel also gave a social media report.

IAFC Staff Liaison Report

Mr. Kevin McGee

Kevin informed the Board that although the nominations submitted for NFPA 1720 committee members were submitted on time, NFPA staff stated that the NFPA has not yet made the appointments due to staffing constraints to place the nominations on the Standards Council agenda. NFPA also stated that there hasn't been an NFPA 1720 committee meeting, therefore not meetings have been missed.

Old Business

No old business.

New Business

Chief Cowger discussed the next in person Board meeting that his department will sponsor to be held in Montana in June. He is seeking input to identify days that minimize scheduling commitment conflicts.

Chief Cowger discussed the value of having the VCOS Board reserve a table at the 2026 CFSI Dinner event.

MOTION: 12 November 2025-03

Motion made and seconded to authorized funds to reserve a table for the VCOS Board at the CFSI Dinner event. Motion carried.

Stokes/Caughey

Chief Cooney reminded all about the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation events scheduled on Saturday.

Chief Catrambone stated that Fire Rescue 1 is interested in in-kind publishing support.

Good of the Order

None

The meeting was adjourned at 1515 hrs ET.

Minutes submitted by:

Mr. Kevin McGee
VCOS Staff Liaison

Chief Shawn P. Stokes
Secretary/Treasurer

Chief Rich Cowger
Chair

Because electronic mail can be altered, the integrity of this communication cannot be guaranteed.