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VCOS Board Meeting Minutes Klein (TX) Fire Department May 16-17, 2025

Participants:

VCOS Board Members Present:

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

VCOS Board Members Not Present:

IAFC Guests/Staff:

Chief John Buckman, Education Coordinator
Kevin McGee, Staff Liaison
Mikel Robinson, Staff Support Contractor
Ken LaSala, Government Relations, and Policy Director (remote)
Scott Beecher, Ward Deisel
Robi King, Vector Solutions
Matt Shrouts, Vector Solutions

Call to Order

Chief Rich Cowger called the meeting to order at 8:06 AM CT.

Approval of April 8, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

Chief Rich Cowger, Chair

MOTION: May 16, 2025-01

Motion made and seconded to approve the April 8, 2025 Board meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Stokes/Cramer

Chair Report

Chief Rich Cowger

Chief Cowger welcomed the Board, legacy partners, and staff. He thanked Chief Catrambone and his staff and Chief Windisch for coordinating and hosting the meeting.

Vice Chair Report

Chief Al Yancey

Chief Yancey informed the Board that the GEMT may be at risk in the federal budget and that FEMA grants are being reviewed again.

International Director Report

Chief Jason Catrambone

Chief Catrambone informed the Board that the IAFC is waiting on the status of federal action as they relate to fire and emergency management. He reported that IAFC Board will be meeting in Bozeman MT June 6 & 7.

Legislative Report

Ken LaSala

Mr. LaSala provided a legislative update report on Congress and the Administration.

Eddie Hertsig was recently hired as a member of the Government Relations and Policy staff and has an EMS background.

Secretary Treasurer Report

Chief Fred Windisch

Chief Windisch presented the Treasurer's report reviewing the last financial statement he received for February 2025. He reported that the Section is in good financial position.

Chief Windisch received a check from Pierce Manufacturing and forwarded it to Kevin McGee for deposit.

Strategic Plan

Chief Al Yancey, Chief Spencer Cheatham

Chief Yancey and Chief Cheatham reviewed the 2025 draft Strategic Plan with the Board for final revisions and updates completing the last step before Board action that will be done at the June 2025 Board meeting.

MOTION: May 16, 2025-02

Motion made and seconded to change the title of the Communications and Behavior Policy to “Code of Conduct”. Motion carried.

Stokes/Catrambone

The Code of Conduct should be posted on the VCOS website. Newly sworn in Board members will be asked to sign the Code of Conduct at the Annual Meeting.

Chief Cheatham will take the lead role with the Strategic Plan going forward.

Election Committee Report

Chief Kevin Cooney

Chief Cooney reported that the election ballots went out on May 15. He reiterated the candidates who are on the ballot and that there is an IAFC bylaws provision on the ballot. Chief Cooney reported that he was able to review the ballot and he thanked the committee and Kevin McGee for the support on the work to prepare for the election.

Chief Cowger directed that the VCOS Board endorsement for Chief Catrambone’s candidacy for IAFC Treasurer be communicate to membership through eblast and social media.

Red Ribbon Report

Chief Spencer Cheatham

Chief Cheatham provided an overview of the Red Ribbon Report to include the resources that are available to volunteer departments that are transitioning to combination departments.

The Board will seek establishing a dialogue with NVFC to seek alignment of roles between all volunteer and combination departments.

Technical Advisory Program (TAP) Report

Chief Jason Caughey, Chief Tim Sendelbach

Chief Caughey and Chief Sendelbach discussed the types of support services that the VCOS should consider providing to volunteer departments that are starting or in the early stages of transitioning to combination department status.

TAP will change to C2C (Chief to Chief). C2C will be established in a way so that it complements ESCI and not compete.

MOTION: March 16, 2025-03

Motion made and seconded to prepare a proposal to present to the IAFC executive Committee for support of Chief to Chief (C2C) and to move forward with its development. Motion Carried

Catrambone/Stokes

Communications Committee Report

Chief Spencer Cheatham

Chief Cheatham presented statistics analysis on the quarterly newsletter.

MOTION: March 16, 2025-04

Motion made and seconded to continue producing the quarterly newsletter for the remainder of the year, focus digital content about VCOS education, legislation, and leadership. The decision to continue the newsletter in 2026 will be evaluated by the end of 2025. Motion Carried.

Cooney/Caughey

MOTION: March 16, 2025-05

Motion made and seconded to allocate up to \$800 for banners and promotional materials to support VCOS marketing and brand recognition. Motion Carried.

Windisch/Stokes

Education Report

Chief John M. Buckman III

Chief Buckman reviewed the Education Report sent to the Board by email. Company Officer Certification will be offered at SUN, the NFFF Bourbon Tasking fundraising event will be done at SUN again.

MOTION: March 16, 2025-06

Motion made and seconded to allocate \$2,000 to add VCOS logos to various course offerings in the IAFC Academy. Motion Carried

Cheatham/Windisch

The FRI Scholarship content was removed from the website as that scholarship was discontinued.

A discussion was conducted to address offering a boat dinner trip event at SUN that will have a charge for attendees to cover costs.

MOTION: March 16, 2025-07

Motion made and seconded for the Board to attend the Thursday boat dinner event that will allow Board presence and interaction with SUN attendees. Motion Carried

Sendelbach/Catrambone

Critical Thinking Academy (CTA)

Chief Jordan Cramer

Chief Cramer presented a written business plan (Progress Report & Strategic Outlook for CTA) that includes funding support for the startup process and the plan for offerings through 2028. Chief Cramer recommended complementary first year VCOS memberships for CTA graduates. Also discussed was scheduling a presentation to Pierce Manufacturing, the funders of CTA.

MOTION: March 16, 2025-08

Motion made and seconded to approve the 2025-2026 proposed CTA funding request.

Motion Carried

Windisch/Caughey

Legacy Partners Update

Mr. Scott Beecher, Ward Deisel. Mr. Robi King, Vector Solutions, Mr. Matt Shrouts, Vector Solutions provided an update on their status and discussed the partnership terminology as well as reiterating their continued commitment to supporting the VCOS.

Staff Support Contractor Report

Ms. Mikel Robinson

Ms. Robinson reported that the Training Officer Award nomination announcement has been sent to all IAFC members and provided a status of the scholarship awards process.

MOTION: March 16, 2025-09

Motion made and seconded to allocate \$800 to fund promotional materials. Motion Carried

Windisch/Stokes

Chief Cowger requested Chief Caughey, Ms. Robinson, Mr. King and Mr. McGee to prepare an Annual Meeting/FRI plan.

Ms. Robinson updated the Board on other assignments she is working on.

Recess at 4:08 PM CT

May 17, 2025

Call to Order

Chief Cowger called the meeting back to order at 8:59 AM CT

Sponsorship and Partnerships Committee Report

Chief Caughey

Discussion on sponsorship and legacy partnerships.

MOTION: May 17, 2025-1

Motion made and seconded to approve the nomenclature of Foundation Partners for the five partners to include Provident, Ward Diesel, IamResponding, VFIS and Pierce. Motion carried.

Yancey/Cooney

A policy will be prepared to institutionalize the motion with a proposal presented at the June 2025 meeting.

Several Board members should be assigned to nurture relationships to promote succession planning for Foundational Partners.

Definitions of corporate partners, affiliate partners, sponsors and exhibitors was discussed to include outlining expectations of each. The Board will approve all corporate partners.

Workforce Solutions Report

Chief Cramer

Chief Cramer informed the Board that progress on Workforce Solutions is on hold due to the federal funding issues that are now being addressed.

Chief Cramer and Chief Cheatham will identify contingency funding possibilities in the event that Workforce Solutions resources are discontinued.

Policies and Procedures Committee Report

Chief Shawn Stokes

The Policy Committee will draft a statement to be considered for policy or a bylaws proposal regarding the required steps for candidate vetting. The target completion time will be the November 2025 Board meeting in Clearwater, FL.

Staff Liaison Report

Kevin McGee

Kevin requested the Membership Department to provide the renewal rate that resulted from the 2023 SUN complementary VCOS memberships.

The Gold Ribbon Report was revised and will be submitted later today for IAFC Board approval.

Kevin will submit for a VCOS Board hotel room block in Orlando for the Headquarters hotel as the first choice.

Chief Windisch requested that Kevin arrange for the section treasurers to meet with

the newly elected IAFC Treasurer and COO Tom Murphy during FRI.

At-Large Member Updates

Chief Kevin Cooney stated that the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend was well attended with 144 Firefighter Line of Duty Deaths were honored with family, friends, fire service members and honored guests in attendance.

Chief Cooney reported on the FEMA Taskforce as an opportunity to identify changes, programs and services that can be shared with the Administration. The Taskforce has 10 members and meets every other Tuesday. The Taskforce is reviewing Presidential Directives that affect the fire service.

MOTION: March 17, 2025-2

Motion made and seconded for Chief Cooney to advise the Taskforce that it is critical for the IAFC to encourage other fire service and public safety organizations to speak with a unified voice across the fire service. Motion carried.

Caughey/Windisch

Old Business

Chief Cowger informed the Board that the three VCOS contracts will be reviewed to fulfill an important due diligence step.

New Business

No new business.

The meeting adjourned at 1225 PM CT.

Minutes submitted by:

Mr. Kevin McGee
VCOS Staff Liaison

Chief Fred Windisch
Secretary/Treasurer

Chief Rich Cowger
Chair

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