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VCOS Board Meeting National Conference Center February 2-3, 2024

Participants:

VCOS Board Members Present:

Chief Rich Cowger, Vice Chair
Chief Fred Windisch, Secretary/Treasurer
Chief Spencer Cheatham, Board Member at Large
Chief Jason Caughey, Board Member at Large
Chief Shawn Stokes, Board Member at Large
Chief Al Yancey, Board Member at Large
Chief Brita Horn, Board Member at Large
Chief Paul Sterling, Board Member at Large

VCOS Board Members Not Present:

Chief Chuck Flynn, Chair
Chief Jason Catrambone, International Director

IAFC Guests/Staff:

Chief John Butler, IAFC President
Chief Donna Black, IAFC Immediate Past President
Chief Norris Croom, IAFC Board Director
Mr. Rob Brown, IAFC CEO/Executive Director
Chief John Buckman, VCOS Education Coordinator
Ms. Mikel Robinson, VCOS Support Position
Mr. Kevin McGee, IAFC Liaison
Mr. David Michaels, Provident Insurance
Mr. Ed Mann, Provident Insurance
Mr. Joe Giorgi, VFIS
Mr. Scott Beecher, Ward Diesel

Call to Order

Chief Cowger chaired the meeting. A roll call was taken and a quorum was present. The meeting came to order at 08:39 hrs ET.

Chief Chuck Flynn was connected via telecon to inform the Board that he is in the hospital where he is addressing a serious health issue. He will immediately begin treatment. The Board encouraged Chief Flynn to fight the disease and have a speedy recovery.

Chief Flynn reported that he submitted Chief Clyde Wilhelm to serve on the IAFC Training and Education Development Committee to which he was appointed.

Chief Flynn briefed the Board on providing input into the National Fire Protection Research project to study regarding how training affects volunteer fire fighters.

Approval of December 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Chief Rich Cowger, Vice Chair

MOTION: 2 February 2024-01

Motion made and seconded to approve the December 12, 2023 Board meeting minutes.

Motion carried.

Stokes/Caughey

Chair Report

Chief Rich Cowger, Vice Chair

Chief Cowger reviewed the VCOS Mission, Vision, and Values statements adopted by the Board.

Chief Cowger informed the Board that Chief Flynn is stepping down as chair effective immediately due to his health condition. Chief Flynn will retain his seat on the board of directors through his term of office. Filling the vacant chair position will be addressed later in the meeting.

Chief Cowger introduced Mikel Robinson who filled the newly contracted VCOS staff resource position. Ms. Robinson expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to perform various staff support duties and that she has a full scope business team who will be available to do specialized tasks when needed.

Chief Cowger recognized Chief Donna Black, Immediate Past President and Chief Norris Croom, IAFC Director who both immediately yielded to IAFC President Chief John Butler.

President John Butler welcomed the Board to Northern Virginia and expressed his thanks for the work of the Section. He reported that the IAFC has great work underway. Chief Butler recognized CEO Rob Brown for the progress the Association is making as the IAFC works forward with the Strategic Plan. President Butler asked CEO Brown to discuss the internal VCOS complaints submitted to the IAFC Board.

Chief Rob Brown explained the detailed IAFC bylaws complaint process that is transferred by the Past Presidents Council to address any complaint submitted to the IAFC Board of Directors. He informed the Board that three past presidents are

appointed to conduct the investigation and make findings with full access to legal counsel.

Chief Donna Black addressed her viewpoint regarding the importance of leadership and focusing our efforts on being highly functional to address the needs of the organization and its members.

Chief Cowger appointed Chief Jason Caughey to serve as VCOS representative for the IAFC review and comment on the draft OSHA regulations impending public comment period.

Strategic Initiatives Work Session

Facilitated by Chief Al Yancey

SWOT - Chief Yancey conducted a VCOS strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats work session to be used as a basis for identification of priority strategic initiatives.

2024 Strategic Initiatives - Chief Yancey conducted a review of 2024 Strategic Initiative input that was received and continued to seek additional ideas from the Board.

Communications and Marketing – Chief Cheatham discussed the Newsletter updates to include the annual schedule of production steps. The next Newsletter is scheduled to be released on March 15, 2024.

Board Policy and Procedures – Chief Yancey and Chief Stokes provided a progress report on policies and procedures under development and sought input for other policies and procedures that are needed.

On Boarding Support Staff Position Contractor – Chief Stokes addressed the onboarding of Mikel Robinson as the newly contracted VCOS Staff Resource Contractor. Chief Stokes requested that a meet and greet meeting be scheduled with IAFC staff.

USFA Update

United States Fire Administrator Lori Moore-Merrill

United States Fire Administrator Lori Moore-Merrill discussed the Fire Service One Voice effort that included the Wildfire Evacuation Round Table, the Summit on Fire Prevention and Control, and the Fire Service National Strategy.

US Fire Administrator Moore-Merrill addressed questions related to AFG funding and shifting the AFG to the USFA.

Education Report

Chief John Buckman

Chief John Buckman suggested that the Yellow Ribbon Report should be updated to revise the term “behavioral health” to “mental health.”

Chief Buckman will propose a revised Ribbon Report update timeline. The survey of VCOS members is under development to determine the value each report has to the fire service. A count of Ribbon Reports downloaded within the last year was requested.

Chief Buckman discussed the Critical Thinking Academy and the Critical Thinking; What is it? webinar.

There are no 2024 in-person courses scheduled as of this meeting.

Chief Buckman stated that Symposium in the Sun planning is in the initial early phase. Speakers are being sought and the SUN Committee is seeking a different type of keynote speaker such as a motivational speaker who is on the national circuit.

Candidate for IAFC Second Vice President
IAFC Second Vice President Candidate
Chief Steve Locke, IAFC Treasurer

Chief Steve Locke discussed his candidacy for IAFC Second Vice President to include sharing his professional background and the contributions he has made to the IAFC.

Chief Cowger will contact the other candidate for Second Vice President to offer the opportunity to speak with the Board.

Health, Wellness and Safety Committee
Chief Al Yancey

Chief Yancey shared the delegation of subcommittees for the Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee as follows;

- Chief Jason Caughey will be lead for Safety subcommittee.
- Chief Kevin Hardwick will be lead for Cancer subcommittee to include updating the Lavender Ribbon Report.
- Chief Pat Kenny will lead the Mental Health Subcommittee. The subcommittee will include Pat Lynch and Crystal Elliott
- Chief Kerrigan will be the Safety Health and Survival Section Liaison to the committee.

Chief Black cautioned the Board to avoid taking on initiatives that fall to other IAFC sections or committees.

February 2, 2024 Board Meeting Recess
Chief Rich Cowger

Chief Cowger recessed the meeting at 16:23 hours ET.

February 3, 2024 Reconvening of Board Meeting

Chief Rich Cowger

Chief Cowger reconvened the Board meeting February 3, 2024 at 08:30 hours ET

Data Ribbon Report

Chief Rich Cowger, Chief Brita Horn

Chief Horn informed the Board that she made the edits to the draft Data Ribbon Report and emailed the updated version prior to the reconvening of the meeting. A discussion of the edit, review and approval process was conducted.

Chief Black suggested that this provides an opportune time to be in the final phase of completion of the report so that it aligns with the USFA implementation of NERIS. The Gold Ribbon Report that addressed NERIS will be up to date with major fire service data capturing system roll out.

Chief Black communicated with US Fire Administrator Lori Moore-Merrill who agreed to have USFA staff insert NERIS information in the draft. Kevin McGee will send the latest Gold Ribbon revision to USFA staff for their input and feedback. The one page NERIS fact sheet will be added as an appendix.

International Director Report/IAFC Board Report

Chief Donna Black

Chief Black reported that the IAFC Board is progressing through, making progress with the Strategic Plan. She shared the intent to create further committees with the similar approach to the TED Committee that will provide inclusiveness of sections, committees and councils with implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Secretary Treasurer Report

Chief Fred Windisch, Secretary/Treasurer

Chief Windisch informed the Board that the section is in sound financial position. He reported that as of December 31, 2023, the General Fund balance was \$144,430 (subject to audit) and Pierce Fund \$269,545. Total estimated net assets on December 31, 2023 was \$322,250. Symposium in the Sun revenue was \$370,725 and expenses were \$303,521 – these are subject to change. Chief Windisch submitted a Treasurers Report to the Board by email.

Chief Windisch stated that all Board members should have direct deposit for travel expense reimbursement because reimbursement will be quicker and it will lower the cost for processing. Kevin McGee was asked to arrange for Bill direct deposit instructions to be sent to Board members who are getting reimbursed through the USPS.

Chief Windisch submitted bylaws technical revisions for submission to the Constitution, Bylaws and Resolutions Committee (CBR) prior to the February 1 deadline. Technical revisions can be approved by the CBR and they do not go on the ballot for a membership vote for approval.

Legislative Report

Ken LaSala, Government and Policy Director

Mr. LaSala encouraged Board members to attend this year's CFSI events and dinner on April 29th because this is a particularly critical year for fire service legislative objectives with many challenges that require Congressional support to include FIRE Act and SAFER Act reauthorization.

Mr. LaSala briefed the Board on the OSHA Emergency Response Standard public comment period and is seeking 1 to 2 representatives from each section to participate in the review and comment preparation process.

Mr. LaSala provides a status review of the Fire Grant and Safety Act, Federal appropriations process, Volunteer Housing bill, Firefighter Cancer Registry, PSOB for Cancer bill, First Net Reauthorization and Wildland Fire Commission Report.

Vice Chair Election

Chief Rich Cowger

Chief Rich Cowger is Chair consistent with VCOS Bylaws due to the vacancy left by Chief Chuck Flynn's resignation as chair.

Chief Cowger opened the floor for vice chair nominations.

MOTION: 3 February 2024-01

Motion made and seconded to nominate Chief Al Yancey for the Vice Chair position. Motion carried.

Cheatham/Caughey

Hearing no further nominations for Vice Chair, Chief Cowger called for a motion to close nominations.

MOTION: 3 February 2024-02

Motion made and seconded to close nominations for Vice Chair. Motion carried.

Horn/Windisch

Chief Al Yancey ascends to the Vice Chair position by acclamation.

Staff Liaison

Kevin McGee

Kelly Walsh was announced as the Assistant Executive Director, Chief Programs Officer for National and Global Programs. Dave Dobis is the Acting Senior Director of NGP Operations.

Chief Stokes requested that Ms. Walsh be invited to the next Board meeting to share information on Workforce Solutions.

Election Report

Chief Shawn Stokes

Chief Stokes reported on behalf of Chief Jim Cook, Election Chair that the application period is open for nominations for three Board positions in the 2024 election cycle. Chief Cook will send weekly updates to the Board throughout the election cycle. Once nominations are closed, the slate of candidates are vetted for eligibility and submitted to Secretary/Treasurer Windisch.

VCOS Board Policy and Procedures

Chief Shawn Stokes and Chief Al Yancey

Chiefs Stokes and Yancey informed the Board that they are drafting a policy for election of Board Officers and capturing meeting minutes.

Chief Stokes and Chief Yancey conducted a work session to brainstorm additional policies that are needed.

Partners Discussion

Chief Rich Cowger

Chief Cowger led a work session to address how VCOS can be a better partner and identify the various types of partnerships.

Collaborative partnerships can include existing partnership initiatives such as with NVFC. These are partnerships where no money is exchanged, and we work together on mutual interest projects. VCOS can focus more on combination systems and NVFS focus more on volunteer systems.

Legacy partners are the four partners that have been with VCOS from the beginning. VCOS should provide special considerations for legacy partners.

Section partnerships are those in with VCOS works with other IAFC sections on mutual interest projects.

The May 2024 meeting will focus attention to how partnerships should work.

Old Business

None

New Business

The next face to face Board meeting will be held in Charleston, SC on May 17 and 18. Travel days will be May 16 and 19. The meeting venue will be at the Embassy Suites in Marion Square.

Good of the Order

The meeting adjourned at 1535 hrs ET.

Minutes submitted by:

Mr. Kevin McGee
VCOS Staff Liaison

Fire Chief Fred Windisch
Secretary/Treasurer

Chief Rich Cowger
Chair

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