



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



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VCOS Board of Directors Meeting

**November 12, 2017
Clearwater Beach, Florida**

MINUTES

Sunday, November 12 (at Hilton Clearwater Beach – 400 Mandalay Avenue, Clearwater, FL 33767)

Present: Chief Timothy Wall, Chief Donna Black, Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Charles Flynn, Chief Richard Cowger, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Ed Rush, Chief James Seavey, Chief Jim Cook

Guests: Mr. Scott Beecher, Mr. Dan Seidberg, Mr. Joe Giorgi, Mr. Ed Mann, Mr. Jeff Siegrist, Chief John Buckman, Dr. Bill Jenaway, Mr. Ron Oettel, Mr. Tom Kuntz

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen, Ms. Jennifer Bragiel, Mr. Shawn Stokes, Ms. Monica Willemsen, Mr. Jeff Dulin, Ms. Sara Stehle

The meeting started at 1:09 pm.

Introduction and Welcome of Guests – Chief Timothy Wall

Chief Wall started the meeting and said a few welcoming remarks. He introduced himself, and asked those present to introduce themselves. Following introductions, Chief Wall welcomed and introduced Ms. Sara Stehle to present an update on Symposium in the Sun and Symposium in the West.

Conferences Update – Ms. Sara Stehle

Ms. Stehle thanked the VCOS Board of Directors for the opportunity to present before them. She emphasized how successful the conference has been.

Ms. Stehle began her update by reviewing Symposium in the Sun. She announced that officially there were 646 registrants. 26 of these attendees were board members and VIP attendees. 537 were conference attendees. Symposium in the Sun had 51 exhibitors and 32 speakers and staff in attendance. Ms. Stehle pointed out that the registration numbers for 2017 are lower than 2016 intentionally. She also emphasized that she has received very positive feedback on Symposium in the Sun.

Ms. Stehle transitioned to discussing the issue Symposium in the Sun 2017 experienced with the hotel block. Only 76% of the hotel block was filled, resulting in a \$10,000 fine. She expressed hope to reduce the fee. To prevent failing to meet room block obligations in the future, Ms. Stehle is working with Chief Windisch to create a plan that would require conference registrants to get a code after registering to book their hotel room. This plan brought up discussion about paying for registrations with the new model. Ms. Stehle explained that if a registrant chooses to pay by credit card, the registrant will be charged immediately. To postpone payment, the registrant should select to pay by check. The registrant can then send the check at a later date.

Chief Rush shared with the board that the New York State Chiefs Association has been doing something similar for their conferences for years. He offered to connect Ms. Stehle with the person in charge of their registrations to share advice.

Chief Seavey shared the concern of several attendees that were unable to be in the main hotel. These attendees felt that being in a different hotel limited their networking opportunities and made it difficult to attend Symposium in the Sun at times due to the high level of security at the hotel. Chief Windisch explained that Symposium in the Sun has 4 more years of contracts with the current hotel, and that there is not a hotel in Clearwater able to hold all registrants.

Chief Collins recommended not opening Symposium in the Sun registration until at Symposium in the West to prevent crossover.

Chairman Wall shifted the discussion to Symposium in the West. He yielded the floor to Chief Collins, who deferred to Ms. Stehle.

Ms. Stehle reminded the board that registration and housing are open for Symposium in the West, and that all Symposium in the Sun attendees received a one-week head start to register for Symposium in the West.

Symposium in the West is contracted to be in Scottsdale, Arizona in 2018 and 2019.

Chief Collins shared the theme for 2018, *If not you, then who? If not now, then when?*. Chief Collins also informed the board that there will be an inaugural Symposium in the West scholarship. Ms. Stehle is currently working with Dr. Pat Lynch on the scholarship.

IAFC Programs Update – Mr. Shawn Stokes, Ms. Monica Willemsen and Mr. Jeff Dulin

Mr. Stokes thanked the board and brought greetings on behalf of Mr. Tommy Hicks and the IAFC staff. He expressed condolences that Mr. Hicks was busy travelling and unable to attend the board meeting.

Mr. Stokes provided an overview of the history of the IAFC's Programs and Technology. Programs and Technology is now focusing on diversifying, because the amount of grants available has been decreasing for several years now. The focus is to diversify in to non-grant based agreements to bring better products forward. The hope is that this expansion will help keep Programs and Technology insulated to a small extent from future federal funding changes.

Mr. Stokes introduced Ms. Monica Willemsen to discuss the National Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) program. Ms. Willemsen thanked the board for allowing the National VWS program to bring their pilots and council together at Symposium in the Sun. She shared that all the pilots and council members have expressed how important and valuable Symposium in the Sun is.

Ms. Willemsen stated that the National VWS program has been utilizing Beyond Helmets and Hoses (BH&H) and Fire Rescue Organizational Guidance for Volunteer Leaders (FROG). She emphasized that the National VWS staff have also been assisting with the creation of the Be Inclusive posters. She expressed her excitement to work on future posters.

Ms. Willemsen explained that the National VWS program will be creating 3 online trainings based on the grant. She welcomed any assistance the board could provide on the development of the online trainings.

Ms. Willemsen updated the VCOS Board on the creation of the Chief's Handbook. This handbook takes the idea of VISION and expands on it to make a mobile friendly and easy to use system. The content is now uploaded, and Ms. Willemsen expressed her desire to have the board review it at a later date.

Chief Wall asked Ms. Willemsen what the timeframe and expectations for reviewing the handbook are. Ms. Willemsen explained that she will get the handbook to everyone by December 1. The team will need feedback sometime in mid-January. The goal is to have the handbook complete by February 1.

Ms. Willemsen also stated that the National VWS team would provide a check list for the board to use in their review.

Ms. Willemsen ended her update with explaining that the National VWS program is discussing a possible meeting next year to discuss the state of the volunteer fire service and where it needs to go in the future. The National VWS team is looking for suggestions of attendees and note takers. This meeting is currently in its very early stages. Ms. Willemsen hopes to have more information by mid-January and will reach out for the board's assistance at this time.

Ms. Willemsen introduced Mr. Jeff Dulin. Mr. Dulin began his update by discussing the Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data (HIFLD). He informed the board that the IAFC has taken ownership of HIFLD, and is creating a web portal that allows fire chiefs to instantly upload their data. This information will also feed into the mutual aid system. The IAFC is currently working with FEMA to create a national mutual aid system (NMAS). NMAS will not replace EMAC, but will fill a current void. This system will be a geospatial related system with Web EOC and ESRI. The system will allow you to see where resources are, allow you to create criteria for the resources you need and do a search based on what you are looking for. The system will have many different abilities.

Mr. Dulin transitioned into a discussion on hurricane tools that the IAFC was able to implement and train individuals on during the hurricanes in Texas and Florida. This tool allowed responders to see real time what was occurring in specific locations. FEMA is now looking to adopt this as a national resource. Mr. Dulin concluded by announcing that NMAS will be launched at the upcoming WUI conference.

Chief Black asked how these new products will be marketed. Mr. Dulin explained that the marketing strategy for HIFLD will be multi-pronged, utilizing a variety of ways and organizations. For NMAS, it will be primarily marketed through the states.

Chief Catrambone asked how NMAS differs from EMAC and ROSS. Mr. Dulin explained that the new version of ROSS will work with NMAS, and that ROSS can only be used with federal assets. The goal of NMAS is to fill a void that was recognized between the different systems. If your information is already in ROSS, it will work seamlessly with NMAS. ALL ESRI apps will soon work together and will be seamless. Mr. Dulin concluded by asking the board to spread the word about HIFLD and NMAS.

Chair's Report – Chief Wall

The VCOS Board of Directors reviewed the October minutes.

Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Catrambone to approve the minutes from the October board meeting. Motion carried.

Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Catrambone to approve the submitted reports that are lacking action items. Motion carried.

Chief Wall started his report with announcing that VCOS will get a table at CFSI again next year.

Chief Wall informed the board that he had a nice conversation with the division secretaries, and that he will be working with Cathy Feyh to improve communications.

Vice Chair's Report – Chief Flynn

Chief Flynn began his report with an update on the Yellow Ribbon Report, which has been very well received. Chief Flynn expressed amazement at how much growth the report has had, and informed the board that he had two interviews during Symposium in the Sun. He expressed gratitude to a survivor's sister, who helped arrange the interviews.

Chief Flynn invited Chief Buckman, who had conducted a focus group during Symposium in the Sun, to discuss the focus group's outcomes. Chief Buckman started by expressing the success of the focus group and emphasizing that the original plan to have 50 people would have been too many people. He explained that the group had a large group discussion for an hour and a half. Participants were asked how comfortable they are speaking with their spouse or other firefighters about this issue. The answer was that they were not comfortable speaking to either. Chief Buckman emphasized that this is a problem that can be recognized, but cannot be fixed by the fire service. It requires professional help.

Chief Buckman remarked that everyone in the focus groups did what they were supposed to do. It was not an easy task to accomplish, it required people to look words up and think about the issue. The group created reports and reported out. Mr. Mike Macdonald captured the large group activities, and will be cleaning his notes up. Chief Buckman expressed that he plans to send a report on the focus group soon.

Chief Flynn continued the Vice Chair's report with an update on Kidde. He expressed their regret that they could not attend Symposium in the Sun, due to their focus being on fire extinguisher recalls.

International Director's Report – Chief Black

Chief Black updated the board on her visit to the IAFC headquarters. She was at the IAFC for an overview of the IAFC to prepare her to be on the IAFC's Board of Directors. She expressed how helpful this overview was in understanding everything the IAFC does for the fire service. The overview consisted of a presentation from all the different areas of the IAFC. Chief Black emphasized that the presentation on how the IAFC gets new sponsors was particularly interesting, and would be good for the board to hear. Chief Black expressed her gratitude for representing the VCOS on the IAFC's Board of Directors and her hope to bridge gaps between the two boards.

Chief Black also discussed that during her time at the IAFC headquarters, she met with the National VWS team. She commended the team for doing a great job and working extremely hard.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report – Chief Collins

Chief Collins included a financial report from the 3rd Quarter of 2017 in the board packet. He reviewed the 2018 budget with the board. Chief Collins explained that the budget is balanced, but the report is misleading. The report itself cannot be changed as that is a required format by the IAFC.

Chief Black recommended a deep dive into the budget at the February board meeting to help future planning, and to generate more individual awareness about the budget. Chief Collins emphasized that at the February board meeting the group should work backwards to establish budget deadlines. Chief Collins recommended having a draft budget for discussion at the July meeting.

Chief Windisch inquired if the IAFC only allows the VCOS to look at certain things with the budget. Chief Collins clarified that they do. Education is a separate side of the budget, and assets are set in assets. Assets are owned by the IAFC. VCOS can only use assets for one-time projects, and they will not cover travel. Other than one-time projects, the VCOS must balance the budget with the money from dues, sponsorships and conferences.

Chief Windisch inquired about 1 or 2 checks not being reflected in the 3rd quarter financials. Chief Collins explained that the checks came in after putting the report together.

Chief Windisch inquired how the board could utilize existing net assets on a more regular basis to fund projects. Chief Collins explained that the process was changed last year, making it easier to utilize the funds. The current budget has a few projects earmarked, which will require no additional paperwork to utilize the earmarked funds. If more is needed, the board can fill out the paperwork and get the IAFC's Board approval. Following this approval, the VCOS Board can use the funds even though it was not in the budget. The IAFC keeps the funds liquid for the VCOS. There are 2 main things that must be kept in mind with the assets funds. For a lot of projects travel and meeting pay are included, but assets can't be used for these costs. These costs will need to come out of the VCOS budget.

Chief Rush wondered why the assets could not be used in the way deemed best by the VCOS Board. He questioned who created this policy, and how can it be changed.

Action Item: Chief Black and Chief Collins are to meet to discuss the usage of assets and the procedure for changing any policy or by-law regarding asset usage. They will report back to the board with their findings.

Chief Collins emphasized the importance of completing projects, and suggested completing some projects before adding new ones.

Chief Wall emphasized that if something needs to be submitted to the IAFC's Board of Directors the request will need to be done a minimum of 2 weeks prior to a board meeting to be placed on the agenda for discussion.

Chief Collins thanked the board for their feedback.

Updates from our Friends and Supporters

Dr. Jenaway thanked the board for everything they do to engage VFIS. Recommended adjusting times to prevent the walk and stair climb from overlapping with the general session and award presentation, in the future. Asked for more lead time to allow for their internal budget to sponsor or donate assistance. By the end of the year, there isn't any money left in the budget. Concluded with a thank you to Mr. Dan Seidberg for his hard work with the Vendor Venue.

Mr. Siegrist thanked the board. Recommended evaluating the award submission process and possibly making some changes. Several incomplete submissions were received this year. Dr. Jenaway did not have the same experience, and thought they received many great applicants. Chief Rush pointed out that many of the incomplete submissions were duplicates of complete submissions. He felt they had very good quality candidates, even though they did not have a large number.

Chief Collins asked when the best time to ask for support from their organizations is. For Mr. Siegrist around November is ideal. Mr. Giorgi explained that their budget is finalized October 15 each year, and recommended having the ask prior to this date. He emphasized that when the money is not in the budget it is more difficult for them, but they will find the money to support the VCOS.

Discussion and Action Items:

By-Laws and Elections – Chief Wall

Chief Wall discussed creating a committee for a member wishing to seek the board that would allow the member a set amount of time to voice their thoughts. This has not been done in the past, and does have restrictions to a certain extent by the IAFC. Chief Wall has a few people currently researching the idea and will be reporting back with recommendations.

Chief Wall announced that the 2018 Elections Committee will be Chief Florentino and Chief Collins with the option to appoint up to 1 additional person. If there are any conflicts, the appropriate changes will be made.

Chief Wall, Chief Rush and Chief Seavey are up for re-election.

Chief Wall reminded the board that to make a by-law change, it must be submitted by November 22.

Chief Ludwig and Chief Carrizzo were endorsed by the VCOS at Symposium in the Sun. Chief Wall opened the floor to discussion on endorsing IAFC candidates. Chief Flynn asked how long does the board wait to endorse an individual. Chief Rush recommended creating a policy saying that the VCOS will not endorse until a specific date. He pointed out that the VCOS is the biggest section in the IAFC, and has a lot of weight behind its endorsement. Chief Cook warned against endorsing too early, as a better candidate could come along. Chief Black agreed that a policy to allow the VCOS to see all

candidates before endorsing would be wise. Chief Seavey raised a concern that the value of the VCOS endorsement could be diminished if the VCOS does not endorse early. Several others warned against having a policy that could potentially diminish the VCOS's endorsement weight. Chief Buckman pointed out that the VCOS could make it policy to only endorse after no more candidates can enter. Chief Collins inquired if this would require a by-laws change. He also recommended speaking with the other sections, and creating a unified policy for endorsements. Mr. Siegrist believed it should not be overly difficult to get consensus with the other sections to not endorse until after nominations have closed.

Action Item: Ms. Kelly Ameen is to clarify the due date for by-law changes.

Chief Windisch recommended moving the close date for nominations earlier. Chief Wall pointed out that this may be an IAFC by-law.

Motion by Chief Wall and seconded by Chief Windisch to create a committee to research the nomination close date, time frame to vote and how to change them. Motion carried.

Symposium in the West – Chief Collins

Chief Collins explained that Symposium in the West will follow a similar format in 2018 as it had in 2017. The opening ceremony will be Thursday. There will be sessions all day Friday that will have a new concept. Saturday will be general session all day. Chief Collins recommended having the board meeting on its own day, to allow board members to be with attendees during the conference.

2018 Booth Schedule – Chief Rush

Chief Rush recommended not doing an entire booth at FireHouse Expo, as they saw very little foot traffic at the booth. Recommended instead having materials at a partner's booth. Chief Seavey raised the concern that the booth was not attractive, and pointed out that this problem is being addressed. Chief Seavey inquired if a better location would be possible. Chief Wall explained that the booth space is usually complimentary to the VCOS. He wondered if the VCOS needed to start paying for booth space to get better locations. Mr. Beecher pointed out that FireHouse booth locations are already picked for next year, and that timing is critical in getting the best booth locations. Mr. Siegrist explained that when a booth is complimentary the booth is typically placed in the leftover locations. He also explained that booths are about branding and connections, not leads. Dr. Jenaway explained that if the VCOS would like to start purchasing booth locations, the budget would need to be doubled.

Action Item: Chief Collins to resend the original exhibiting report with recommended locations on pages 9 and 10.

Chief Collins explained that the board had previously approved rotating the state shows around. Chief Rush inquired how many additional shows can the VCOS afford to go to, and how many additional shows can the VCOS staff. Chief Wall recommended at least 2. Ms. Ameen shared that it is helpful if someone is driving to the show. This allows items to be shipped to the individual instead of the show.

Action Item: Chief Seavey and Chief Rush to work together on the booth schedule and have a draft for the February board meeting.

Exhibiting Task Force – Chief Seavey and Chief Collins

Chief Seavey updated the board that there is only one outstanding item, the actual exhibit. The taskforce decided to work with Mr. Siedberg and Mr. Beecher on the exhibit look. There will be 2 identical booths with an accountability piece that requires the booth and all its parts to be signed in and out.

Chief Collins explained that the goal is to accomplish everything in a short timeframe, and that the taskforce believes everything will come in under budget.

Mr. Siedberg explained that he will be sending out an email for bullet input to incorporate into the exhibit.

2018 VCOS Board Meetings – Chief Wall

Chief Wall announced that the February board meeting will be February 9 and 10. Everyone should plan to come in on February 8 and leave on February 11. Currently the location is likely to be in Canada, so please ensure you have a valid passport. More information to come.

Chief Wall also reminded everyone that there will be a board meeting at Symposium in the West, May 3-5. Chief Wall would like to incorporate how the board can interact with more people to the May board meeting.

Communications Committee – Chief Rush and Chief Cook

Chief Rush explained that the committee is being revitalized. The current committee members are Chief Cook, Chief Larson, Ms. Joelle Fishkin, Mr. Michael Hall, and Chief Rush.

Chief Rush updated the board on the committee's most recent meeting with Ms. Jenny Bragiel Cozad and Ms. Kelly Ameen. He explained that the next newsletter will be Ms. Fishkin's last newsletter, and that the committee is exploring new opportunities. Ms. Bragiel Cozad presented a nice mockup of an electronic newsletter. The committee is still planning on printing some newsletters, and is currently researching its budget and funding. The committee would like to do electronic newsletters quarterly, and have a print version twice a year. The print version would be the highlights from the 2 prior electronic versions. Chief Cook added that another option being considered is doing 3 electronic and one print. The budget is currently \$6,600 to do 3 print newsletters.

Chief Rush explained the capabilities of an electronic newsletter, and suggested that Paratech's sponsorship may need to be re-evaluated. Chief Rush suggested that the amount of money may need to be increased due to the additional exposure or a second non-competing sponsor may need to be added. This needs to be explored further, starting with the predicted cost of doing 4 electronic and 2 print newsletters.

Chief Rush also discussed modernizing the print version, to make it more visually appealing. Possibly making it more like a magazine. Plan to have more information for the next meeting.

Chief Cook spoke to the VCOS social media presence, and referenced an overview that Ms. Bragiel Cozad provided on the VCOS Twitter and Facebook pages. He pointed out the importance of Symposium in the Sun, Symposium in the West and FRI, where there are spikes on the accounts. Chief Cook felt that FRI was not worthwhile, but the spike in activity shows that the VCOS's presence did have a big impact.

Ms. Ameen pointed out that a new editor will need to be found. Chief Wall suggested Mr. Mike Macdonald.

Action Item: To report at the next board meeting recommendations for changes to the newsletter based on research conducted.

Education Committee – Chief Collins

Chief Collins summarized the meeting held during Symposium in the Sun. He thanked the IAFC staff for their recommendations and contributions. He shared that he will have more information for the next meeting.

Bullying, Harassment & Workplace Violence Task Group

Action Item: Communications Committee to reach out to the Bullying, Harassment & Workplace Violence Task Group and assist them.

Cancer Initiatives – Chief Seavey

The initiative has made a lot of progress. At first, the council disregarded those representing volunteers, but this is no longer the case. The Alliance is now located under the Center for Excellence rather than the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. The committee will be doing 3 webinars, with the first one being an overview and the last 2 being in-depth webinars. NVFC is claiming they are a full partner, and are partnering on the webinars as well.

CPSE Commission on Professional Credentialing – Chief Cowger and Chief Cook

Chief Cook plans to reach out to some individuals to form a committee, and is looking for additional people. Chief Cook expressed concern about a lack of benefit with the Certificate of Excellence, and recommended against putting 2-3 board members on the committee.

Committees – Chief Wall

Action Item: Review the committees lists on pages 69-72 of the Board Meeting Packet and send Chief Wall any recommendations.

Federal Regulators Toolkit

Chief Wall asked if the Federal Regulators Toolkit was budgeted. Chief Collins explained yes the toolkit has been budgeted.

Be Inclusive Posters and Diversity Initiatives – Chief Cook and Chief Cowger

Chief Cook updated the board that a 3rd poster is being created, and that he believes it will be released at Symposium in the West. Chief Cook asked about the phasing out of the posters. Chief Wall explained that the Be Inclusive posters will sunset in 2018. Chief Cook expressed hope that interest could be generated around the new poster, and informed the board that there will be potentially 3 more posters next year.

Membership Report – Chief Wall

Chief Wall referenced the provided membership report, and encouraged the board to read it.

New Business:

Cancer Ribbon Report, Budget, Timeline – Chief Seavey

Chief Seavey explained that everything cancer related should be run through the Alliance. The creation of the report was announced at the Cancer Symposium. Chief Seavey explained that the assignments have been completed, and that the group is actively pulling information together. The group is working with the hopes to have the report released at FRI in August 2018.

Action Item: Chief Seavey to send outline, dates and timeline for the Cancer Ribbon Report for the next board meeting.

Naming of 1 VCOS Symposium in the Sun Scholarship

Chief Wall discussed the naming of 1 VCOS Symposium in the Sun scholarship either existing or new after Chief Robert Bettenhausen.

Motion by Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Collins to name one of the existing Symposium in the Sun scholarships after Chief Robert Bettenhausen without changing the existing criteria for the scholarship. Motion carried.

Chief Black emphasized the importance of explaining the history and why the scholarship is named after Chief Robert Bettenhausen.

Symposium in the Sun Scholarship Amount – Chief Wall

Chief Wall inquired if the scholarship amounts for Symposium in the Sun needed to be increased. Several individuals stated that the current amounts are an appropriate amount.

Donation to Chief Brunacini's Memorial Fund

Chief Collins explained that there are discretionary funds for a donation.

Motion by Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Windisch to make a donation to the Arizona Burn Center for Chief Brunacini's memorial fund in the amount recommended by the treasurer based on precedent. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Future of VCOS Project and Succession Planning for Board of Directors and Section – Chief Buckman

Chief Buckman stated that a document was created in Houston in February 2017, and asked if this program is something that should be revisited.

Action Item: Revisit this program at the February 2018 board meeting.

Interim Chief Handbook

Chief Rush expressed his concern that the VCOS is not the appropriate section to be creating this document. Chief Flynn recommended EFO creating the handbook with the VCOS support.

Action Item: Chief Wall to contact EFO and see if they are interested in taking the lead on the Interim Chief Handbook.

Roundtable

Several individuals expressed gratitude for everyone's hard work.

Motion by Chief Catrambone and seconded by Chief Rush to go into of Executive Session. Motion carried.

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

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

The meeting ended at 5:36pm.