



# Volunteer & Combination Officers Section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs

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## VCOS Board of Directors Meeting

**November 17, 2019**  
**Hilton**  
**Clearwater Beach, Florida**

### MINUTES

**Sunday, November 17** (at Hilton Clearwater Beach at 400 Mandalay Ave. Clearwater Beach, Florida)

Present: Chief Donna Black, Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Norvin Collins, Chair Charles Flynn, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Jim Cook, Chief Ed Rush, Chief Rich Cowger, Chief Ron Oettel, Chief Al Yancey, Mr. Dan Seidberg, Mr. Ed Mann, Mr. Jeff Siegrist, Mr. Scott Beecher, Dr. William Jenaway, Chief John M. Buckman III, Mr. Troy Markle

Staff: Ms. Jennifer Bragiel, Ms. Kelly Ameen, Ms. Lisa Yonkers

The meeting started at 12:16 pm.

#### **Introduction and Welcome – Chair Flynn**

Chair Flynn called the meeting to order and welcomed everybody to the meeting. He reviewed the agenda and had the VCOS Board provide short introductions and reviewed the consent agenda.

**Motion by Chief Catrambone and seconded by Chief Yancey to accept the consent agenda. Motion carried.**

#### **Spring Update – Chief Collins**

Chief Collins expressed frustrations with the initial Symposium in the Spring postcard. He explained that the committee is satisfied with the end result, and there may be two separate postcards for the event. There was a discussion on the process for creating the postcard and the mailing list of the postcard to reduce and minimize financial waste.

The board recommended the Program Planning Committee get the price for graphic design upfront and get quotes from other options.

The board discussed the date conflict of Symposium in the Spring with CFSI. Chief Flynn spoke with Mr. Bill Webb about it. Mr. Webb was appreciative and understanding.

#### **Symposium in the Sun Update – Ms. Yonkers and Chief Windisch**

Ms. Yonkers updated the board that Symposium in the Sun had 765 registrants, 525 paid registrants and 14 no shows. The food costs went up again this year, which was expected. The event has about a \$40,000 increase in sponsorships, and the feedback has been very positive.

**Action Item: Ms. Yonkers to pass on the board's gratitude to Ms. Stehle for all her hard work.**

A discussion on the vetting process for speakers took place. The board recognized that they cannot believe all accusations but also emphasized the importance of protecting the VCOS image and brand. It was recommended that all presenters be put to the Google test. The board emphasized the importance of all presentations aligning with the VCOS mission, vision and values. The board concluded to leave the presenter vetting process up to the program planning committee, but recommended the committee submit the list to the board for review prior to finalizing it, especially speakers that may be questionable or controversial.

The board discussed several other changes for Symposium in the Sun including balancing religious and non-religious topics, balancing heavy and light topics, using a VCOS specific slide template for all presentations, and increasing overall VCOS branding.

**Action Item: For 2021, Symposium in the Sun starts on Veterans Day, the program planning committee is to do something special around it; something more than normal.**

### **Friends and Supporters**

Many friends and supporters expressed their gratitude for being included in the meeting and engaged by the VCOS. Dr. Jenaway and Mr. Markle discussed Dr. Jenaway's retirement. Mr. Markle will be the main point of contact for the VCOS moving forward and has committed to continuing to build and expand the relationship between the VCOS and VFIS.

Mr. Seidberg challenged the board to think about the next big thing and figure out what the VCOS's next central focus will be. The Lavender Ribbon Initiative and Yellow Ribbon Report led the forefront for discussions in the fire service.

Mr. Mann recommended to offer education sessions at different levels and tailor the content specific to the level.

### **Project Guidance – Chief Black and Chief Cowger**

Chief Black provided an introduction on the creation of the management process for everything the VCOS does. The excel document developed will be a parking lot for everything we do. It looks cumbersome but in reality, it is quite simple. Chief Black provided an overview of the template. It was explained that individual tabs would be sent out to leads to fill out. They would submit these to Ms. Bragiel who would compile them into the excel book for the board.

**Action Item: The Project Guidance group is to regather and make changes based upon the discussion and provide a timeline for new and additional feedback.**

### **2020 Projects**

Chief Buckman discussed updating the Yellow Ribbon Report. This would not be a rewrite, it would be adding new information that the report does not cover currently. Goal would be to have the report

ready for FRI. Would like some print copies, but this would be dependent on a sponsor. Current plan is to release it digitally only. Would like to make the updated version of the Yellow Ribbon Report and the Lavender Ribbon Report e-books.

Chief Buckman discussed updating the Lavender Ribbon Report in the second quarter of 2020. This would provide greater clarity and incorporate what has been learned from the classes.

**Action Item: Scott Beecher chair of the LRR Committee with VCOS and NVFC is to create LRR reports and submit to Chief John M. Buckman III as Education Coordinator.**

Chief Buckman discussed the need to update the Red, White and Blue Ribbon Reports, and recommended starting with the Red Ribbon Report.

The group discussed doing a couple of webinars on the New and Interim Chief Guide.

A discussion took place on the America is Burning rewrite taking place.

**Action Item: Chief Black is to advocate for the VCOS to have a rep to assist with the America is Burning Report.**

Chief Cook and Chief Buckman updated the VCOS Board on the professional development meeting at the National Fire Academy. The original intention was to require everyone to have a degree. Chief Cook emphasized the importance of VCOS having a representative in the room to be the voice of volunteers. Some of what they had discussed was unrealistic for volunteers.

### **Budget – Chief Windisch**

Chief Windisch explained that the FY 2020 budget has been accepted but the official approval of the budget will happen in December. There may be some minor changes, but none are expected.

Chief Windisch spoke to the FY2019 budget. The budget was looking better than initially anticipated.

Chief Windisch updated the board on his meeting with Pierce. They are in favor of increasing their donation, but the VCOS will need to submit a formal request document with an explanation for the increase. Chief Windisch recommended delaying the submission until a really strong education plan has been created to provide to Pierce on how the money will be spent.

Chief Windisch discussed staff time. He met with Mr. Allen Lassinger the director of finance, and Mr. Lassinger has promised to provide the staff time charge by January 15.

### **Chair's Report – Chief Flynn**

Chief Flynn updated the board on his meeting with the NFFF/Knox Advisory Board. The meeting was to get opinion on their new system. The group also discussed how buildings are getting smarter and some issues this has created.

Chief Flynn and Chief Catrambone updated the board on their meeting with FirstNet. FirstNet had brought in chiefs to discuss communications, towers and user experiences. One of the things stressed was nobody is going to have 100% coverage until they can get lease agreements or smaller sites. Coverage is not going to come as quickly as people think. FirstNet is not forgetting the small departments, Chief Flynn and Chief Catrambone pushed during the meeting that many departments

don't have IT people. During the meeting service issues were discussed, and FirstNet made it clear that they are addressing the issues. The group also discussed putting the necessary equipment in buildings to keep signals alive and automatic Wi-Fi connectivity to help improve communications.

Chief Flynn discussed the distribution of the Lavender Ribbon Initiative calendars.

**Action item: Jenny is to send Mr. Ed Mann and Mr. Scott Beecher some calendars; the remainder are to be divided among the board.**

Chief Flynn announces that Dr. Lynch has agreed to help the VCOS with ghostwriting articles. She is absolutely amazing to volunteer her time and she makes it really easy.

### **FRI Meet and Greet Change**

**Action Item: The new FRI Meet and Greet Committee will be Chief Cowger, Chief Rush and Chief Collins.**

The Annual Meeting will be on Thursday. It was recommended to do the Meet and Greet on the show floor separate from the meeting.

**Action Item: The FRI Meet and Greet Committee is to explore options for the Meet and Greet and Annual Meeting.**

### **International Director Report – Chief Black**

Chief Black informed the board that the BLUF Reports will be going out to the VCOS Board. They have been very helpful for the IAFC Board to understand the work being done. She explained that IAFC President Chief Gary Ludwig and Mr. Rob Brown have been working really well together and have been very transparent with the board.

ESCI has a contract for the new CEO position. They have gathered info from a variety of stakeholders to make sure they are gathering everybody's needs and wants. There is no set timeframe, but we are anticipating to begin vetting candidates by February or March.

Chief Black provided an update on the VWS programs and the Women Chiefs Council. She also went over the tentative schedule for the VCOS February Board Meeting. Chief Jenkins and the Arkansas Fire Chiefs Association has been a huge support and have given the VCOS \$1,500 for the meeting.

**Action Item: Invite local chiefs to a breakfast on Saturday morning of the VCOS February Board Meeting.**

### **New Business**

- Magnet name badges for all board members.

**Motion by Chief Catrambone and seconded by Chief Black to get a magnetic name badge for each board member. Motion carried.**

- Strategic and Business Planning for Leading Volunteer to Paid Fire-EMS Transition
  - Discussion on partnering on the program.
  - How would the VCOS be incorporated?

- VCOS would get 10% of registrations.
- Would this get rid of LTC?
  - Yes. Would limit the agreement for 2 years. This would allow the VCOS time to rewrite LTC, while still offering something on the topic.
- What about the new SAFER grant?
  - There was a discussion on if the VCOS would be giving up our devaluing their LTC class and if this partnership was right for the VCOS.
  - Ms. Ameen described the SAFER Grant that would provide for the creation of a new LTC class that could be delivered.
  - Many board members recommended keeping LTC a VCOS product, and recommended focusing on keeping the ribbon reports up to date.

**Action Item: Chief Buckman to let them know the VCOS Board will not be moving forward with the partnership.**

- A taskforce of board and non-board members will be created to work on the Red Ribbon Report.
- Mr. Spencer Cheatham will be the IAFC lead for the project. He will create a stakeholder group utilizing people the VCOS identifies for the creation of the course.
- A discussion took place on collaborating with the VWS and ESCI to allow for resources and assistance beyond the report or a class.
- NFPA Fentanyl
  - Main Idea they should not touch it.

**Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Catrambone for the VCOS Board to take the position that they do not support the NFPA in establishing a standard for fentanyl response. Motion carried. Unanimous.**

- Chief Flynn is to coordinate with Jenny on why the VCOS Board took the stance.

**Action Item: As an individual chief not VCOS rep the VCOS Board Members were encouraged to send feedback to Evan Davis who is working on an IAFC response**

**Old Business**

- Website Lockdown
  - The committee recommended the following changes:
    - The website be redone and remain open to everybody
    - Older no longer relevant materials be archived
    - IAFC.org/Volunteer should direct to VCOS.org
    - Recommend the addition of a get more related information box at the bottom of each page
    - Watermark all resources as VCOS for when they get printed
    - Add ResponderHelp.com to the website

Add an online apparel store

## **Roundtable**

Many expressed gratitude.

Chief Catrambone: One item for the February meeting discussion is that it will be 130 degrees in Phoenix. We shouldn't wear class A's.

Ms. Ameen: If there is something you would like in the BLUF Report, you can always ping me. Maybe something Symposium results.

Mr. Markle: On behalf of the NFFF we appreciate all you do for us. I also understand Kevin Cooney was reappointed by you as your VCOS rep. He is doing a great job, and a special thank you for sharing him with us. The other thing is Bill is retiring officially in January. We really appreciate all he has done for us and the relationship he has with us.

Chief Flynn: Kevin Cooney is the VCOS rep to NFFF, the reappointment came to me. Troy and Ron reached out asking, who we would like appointed and recommended he stay on. Bill, Barry and Jeff are stepping down. We need to maintain those relationships.

**Motion to take 5 minute break and then return to Executive Session. Flynn Black. Passed Unanimous.**

**Motion by Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Black to go into Executive Session. Motion Passed.**

**Motion by Chief Catrambone and seconded by Chief Cowger to end the Executive Session. Motion Passed.**

**Motion by Chief Cook and seconded by Chief Yancey to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:38pm.