



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

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VCOS Board Teleconference Thursday, January 8, 2015

Minutes

Called to order: 4:05 p.m.

Present: Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Shane Crutcher, Chief Dan Eggleston, Chief Charles Flynn, Chief Randy Larson, Chief Timothy Wall, Chief Fred Windisch

Absent: Chief Jim Seavey and Chief Mike Vaughn

IAFC Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen, Mr. Evan Davis

Welcome and Agenda Overview - Chief Wall

The minutes from December were reviewed. Chief Windisch's name was misspelled in one place and needs to be fixed.

Motion by Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Windisch to approve the minutes from the December board call with the correction of Chief Windisch's name. Motion carried.

The next VCOS e-blast will focus on VCOS' 2014 accomplishments based on Chief Crutcher's list which was attached to the agenda. If the board has any additions or changes, send them to Ms. Ameen.

IAFC Government Relations Update – Mr. Evan Davis

Mr. Evan Davis provided an update to the board. Below is some information about three bills. These all died in the previous Congress but are expected to be introduced in the new, 114th, Congress which started yesterday:

- 1) **Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Reauthorization Act (VRIPRA) –** This bill has generally been supported in the House by Rep. John Larson (D-CT) and in the Senate by Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Susan Collins (R-ME). VRIPRA would reauthorize an expired portion of the tax code which permits volunteers to receive all property-based benefits and up to \$600 in other benefits before the incentives are considered taxable income. This bill had an advantage in that it reauthorizes a provision which was already passed by a previous Congress. However, the bill does not contain an offset for the cost of waiving taxes on the applicable incentives. Best chance of getting passed.

- 2) **Volunteer Emergency Responders Tax Deduction Act** – This is a new bill which was introduced at the end of the previous Congress by Reps. David McKinley (R-WV) and David Loebsack (D-IA). This bill would permit volunteers to count each hour of service in a given year as a charitable contribution to their fire department. Volunteers would be credited \$20 for each hour of service and would then be able to deduct the total value of their time like they would with any other charitable contribution. The bill establishes that volunteers may deduct up to a maximum of 300 hour per year. There is no official cost estimate for this bill, however the bill does not contain a means to pay for the cost. Cost may make it hard to get passed.
- 3) **SERVE Act** – Rep. Richard Hanna (R-NY) introduced this bill last Congress to provide an annual \$1,000 tax credit for volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel. Similar to the above two bills, the SERVE Act also does not have a means to pay for the projected costs.

What does CFSI think? Mr. Davis explained that CFSI did not take a position on the SERVE Act or the Volunteer Emergency Responders Tax Deduction Act. Mr. Davis guesses they will agree that it is better to spend time on VRIPRA which is most likely to pass.

Mr. Davis will get an email out to VCOS when VRIPRA is reintroduced so that VCOS can reach out to members of congress.

Chief Collins asked why three different bills are being introduced. Isn't it better to have one strong and feasible bill? Mr. Davis doesn't necessarily think having three separate bills hurts the chance of any getting passed.

20th Anniversary Publication – Chief Wall

All mailings have gone out. Dr. Onieal from the NFA sent an email stating he thought it was outstanding. Chief Windisch mentioned that the invoices are needed ASAP so they can hit the 2014 financials. Chief Wall will reach out to Mr. Mike Macdonald to remind him.

Updates from Chief Eggleston

The POV Best Practices Paper was sent to the Safety, Health, and Survival Section and the NVFC. He received good feedback from the NVFC. They have until 1/15 for further comment before the paper will be submitted for final review to the IAFC. Provident and VFIS provided helpful input as well. Chief Eggleston will report on this at the upcoming IAFC Board Meeting.

Chief Jim Seavey and Chief Eggleston are scheduled to attend the Cancer Prevention Strategy meeting January 13-15 in Washington D.C. The goal of the meeting is to review what is known related to firefighter cancers, and develop a coordinated effort to reduce exposures, illnesses, and deaths related to cancer, and to provide support for those affected by this insidious disease.

The IAFC Board meeting is scheduled for January 21-24 in Oklahoma City.

NFPA 950 Alternate

Chief Middleton has retired. Chief Melby, the previous alternate, has been recommended to be the official representative to NFPA 950. We need to nominate a new alternate. Chief Windisch suggested that Scott Siefert might be a good candidate. Chief Crutcher has someone in mind as well. Chief Wall asked board members to send any recommendations to him. The board agreed that Chief Wall can appoint someone based on interest he receives.

Symposium West – Chief Wall and Symposium Committee

Chief Crutcher sent an email with several attachments provided by the IAFC Conferences Department including a general potential schedule/layout and other future conference dates. Chief Catrambone will send some dates of other states conferences in his region.

Chief Larson suggested getting the Missouri Valley Division more involved. Perhaps it could be held in one of those states?

Chief Windisch suggested that we decide whether or not we are going to definitely do it and if so, we should start very minimally.

We need to have a face-to-face discussion in February about Symposium West before reaching out to divisions about where to have it. Talk to the Symposium Committee after the February board meeting.

Survey data will be available for the board to review and help with the discussion.

NVFC Safer Recruitment and Retention Project – Chief Flynn

Chief Flynn communicated with the NVFC about the concerns with the pole advertisement. The NVFC confirmed that it would not be used. Chief Flynn will have more of an update at the February board meeting after the next project conference call.

Transition/Labor Management Project – Chief Larson

Chief Struble has a rough draft out and is making changes he receives. It should be ready for publication by the February board meeting. Mr. Mark Light and Chief Bryant didn't end up having the meeting with the IAFF. The project committee is still working to finalize the name of the project and it will be discussed on their next call. The group suggested that a shorter name might be better. The originally suggested longer name could be part of the description of the course. There will be a session on this topic at FRI 2015.

VCOS Member Survey – Chief Wall

There have been over 170 responses received so far and the survey will close on Friday. The results will be included in the February board packet.

Communications Committee – Chiefs Crutcher, Larson, Catrambone

Ms. Joelle Fishkin and the committee are working on the next quarterly print newsletter. It should be ready for distribution this month.

Regular updates are being done via social media and the website.

We need to continue adding resources to VISION. If you see something relevant, don't forget to send an email to Ms. Ameen to post on the VISION website.

2015 Board Meetings – Chief Wall

The next live VCOS board meeting is Feb 6 and 7 in San Diego hosted by TargetSolutions. We are inviting Chief Metcalf, a representative from the Western Fire Chiefs and GPO, other local departments, etc. Reports for the board packet are due 1/26. There will be a call next week with the VCOS Executive Committee and TargetSolutions to work on details for the meeting.

Chiefs Crutcher, Seavey, Collins, and Eggleston will be meeting with some folks on Thursday morning. Chief Metcalf offered for them to come by in the afternoon. Chief Metcalf is coming to the meeting on Friday. Feel free to invite others to the board meeting.

One topic of discussion at the meeting will be about a potential IAFC proposal for the “volunteer of the future.” Chief Eggleston and Chief LaBelle met with IAFC staff earlier in the week to discuss some ideas. We will have a brainstorming session for up to 2 hours on this topic at the VCOS board meeting. Ms. Ameen will have an outline of what the IAFC is thinking about for the proposal and Chief Eggleston will help facilitate the discussion.

There already seems to be a lot on the agenda so we need to be careful not to add too much. There was a suggestion of breaking the agenda into three sections: action items, discussion items, and information only items. The board thought that was a good idea.

The May board meeting date is still to be determined. We are looking into having it at the NFA to tie in the Shell deck lid presentation to the Fire Heritage Museum. The meeting could be at the NFA or at a local Maryland firehouse. Dates for the meeting depend on Shell and the race team’s schedule. We are aiming for early May, probably during the week on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.

Exhibiting Booth

Chief Wall received inquiries for VCOS to exhibit at Pennsylvania Fire Expo (Harrisburg) and Firehouse Expo (Baltimore).

The Exhibiting Taskforce has a call next week. Chief Seavey is leading the taskforce.

Roundtable and Committee/Project Updates

Wall: Mr. Mike Macdonald is working on a draft outline of the Diversity Report. It will be ready for review in February.

Catrambone: He is looking into interest in having ISO and You in North Dakota. Chief Wall suggested that he work with Mr. Skip Gibson and Chief Larry Curl.

Flynn: He will be going to AFG panel reviews. Chief Catrambone mentioned he was scheduled to go but is unable to attend now.

Collins: 25 people attended FROG in Maryland. There should be a check coming from Maryland for that class.

Windisch: There will be a You and ISO class in Kentucky on February 21.

Larson: Surgery and radiation treatments are done. He hasn't been officially pronounced cancer-free, but hopes to be after some future scans.

Wall: There has been interest in an ISO cost benefit to show value to the community. If you make a change, what is the cost to make that change vs. the end cost savings? Can this be added and published?

The next meeting will be February 6-7 in San Diego.

Call ended: 5:08 p.m.