



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

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VCOS Board Teleconference

Wednesday, April 8, 2020

4:00 p.m. Eastern/3:00 p.m. Central/2:00 p.m. Mountain/1:00 p.m. Pacific

Attendees dialed-in via Teams Meeting

MINUTES

Present: Chief Charles Flynn, Chief Al Yancey, Chief Rich Cowger, Chief Ron Oettel, Chief Donna Black, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Ed Rush, Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Jim Cook

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen, Ms. Catherine Lugo

The call started at 4:04 PM.

Welcome - Chief Flynn

The VCOS Board provided a brief update regarding the COVID-19 response in their service area. Chief Flynn encouraged periodic check-ins to support each other during the increased demands throughout the pandemic development.

The CFSI donation has been put on hold. Limiting VCOS spending is encouraged at this time.

Consent Agenda – Chief Flynn

Motion carried to approve November 2019 – March 2020 minutes as presented on the consent agenda.

Symposium in the Spring – Chief Collins

Symposium in the Spring has been cancelled.

Symposium in the Sun – Chief Windisch

Registration is planned to open in May, which is subject to change. The committee is taking cost cuts into consideration in the event of the projected 30% decrease in attendees. There are tentative ideas for speakers and proposed agreement negotiations.

Election – Chief Rush

All 5 candidates are vetted. Their names and statements are on the VCOS Elections page. The election will open May 18 and close June 17. Ms. Ameen shared that while elections had previously been on a single ballot, this year each section will have a separate ballot.

Communications Committee – Chief Rush

The next quarterly newsletter will be shorter and more focused on helping volunteer and combination departments during this challenging time. Chief Flynn's video message for the Chair Report will also be included in the newsletter. The newsletter will be sent out by the end of the month.

VCOS and Shurr – Chief Flynn

The Mesmerizing Leadership class on April 7 did not have any registrants. The next class will be held in June. Chief Windisch shared that Tim Shurr understands the current challenges and will continue to move forward.

Education Update – Chief Flynn

Yellow Ribbon Report

A survey will be sent out to help guide updates to the report.

Beyond Hoses & Helmets: Putting the Pieces Together

The class on March 28-29 was cancelled. The next class is scheduled for September 19-20 in Niceville, Florida.

Lavender Ribbon Initiative

5 webinars remain and the next one is Session 2: Annual Physicals on April 14. Chief Black requested data for the number of webinar registrants.

LION classes are on hold for now.

Roundtable, Announcement, and Committee Updates

Many expressed gratitude.

Chief Black: We are currently working with accountants to address the cash flow concerns. Adding COVID makes things even tighter. Even though VCOS has our own budget, we need to be careful moving forward. The CEO process finished in March. As the Board came to those conclusions, the virus hit, so we are discussing how to manage that going forward. We appreciate everything Mr. Rob Brown and IAFC staff are doing.

Chief Collins: If you hear of any department needs that I can push through in the COVID-19 Task Force, please let me know. How much do you want me to start sharing with you all so you're in the loop? What additional information do you want, as we're all inundated with it already?

Chief Windisch: I agree that we're already getting a lot of information. If anything is significant that we haven't see elsewhere, that would be something we can use.

Chief Yancey: The hot topic here is dealing with larger departments starting to eliminate second employment. Some departments have lost 25-30% of their responders. We are working on guidance for smaller departments who have relied on that support since many primary employers have mandated no second employment.

Chief Oettel: I sent out a summary report on our recent sponsorship meeting. Please read over it and let me know if you have any thoughts or comments. We had a good meeting and left with lots of questions. We need to have more formality in the way we handle sponsorships and a better structure.

Chief Windisch: I want to comment on the 5th bullet. In our formative years, we felt that the VCOS needed to be different in that corporate partners would give us feedback in our meetings. I don't see a problem with corporate partners attending meetings and giving us feedback, so this bullet point concerns me. I don't see much about fundraising. If we

structure this tightly and have so many restrictions, the Board won't be able to go out and reach people. We're successful because we've been open. If we treat people just as a money source, they might lose interest in us.

Chief Cook: When discussing this, there was sensitivity to our relationships with existing vendors. When talking about sponsors, we do need to look at the money aspect. The Board is going to need to have a tough conversation about how we approach this.

Chief Oettel: Both are good points. We didn't intend to eliminate the fundraising and we are hoping to bring in new people. We just need a framework. This is just a starting point for good discussion and will take it to heart moving forward.

Chief Rush: I was on a webinar the other day with FEMA and there was a lot of discussion about reimbursements. Make sure you start documenting everything because the period goes back to January 22. Make sure you're registered now so you're not trying to play catch up later. We started paying stipends to have people driving the ambulance around the clock, but I'm curious how that's going to work with being reimbursed. Maybe we need to talk to FEMA to make sure volunteers aren't being left out of this.

Chief Flynn: Make sure you have everything as a written policy now.

Chief Collins: Track any changes in operations. You need documentation on how and why you're paying them. I'll put a package together for what you should be tracking and send it out to everyone.

Chief Cook: Career staff can't also volunteer in Loudoun County. Some neighboring departments are looking at not being allowed to volunteer or do part time. That's been a substantial hit for us.

Ms. Ameen: The SAFER application period will open Monday. Typically, we would be scheduling meetings about upcoming FRI scholarships. Since we are unsure about FRI right now, this is on hold.

Ms. Lugo: The Chair Report for this month is scheduled to go out next week.

Chief Flynn thanked everyone for attending the call.

The call adjourned at 5:03 PM.