



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

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VCOS Board of Directors Annual Meeting

August 19, 2020
#VirtualFRI via Livestream

MINUTES

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, Chief Kevin Hardwick, Chief Joe Florentino, President Gary Ludwig, First Vice President Richard Carrizzo

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen

The meeting started at 1:00 pm ET.

Introduction and Welcome – Chair Flynn

Chair Flynn called the meeting to order and welcomed those attending the VCOS Annual Meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was conducted. He reviewed the agenda for the meeting with the group and introduced the VCOS Board of Directors.

VCOS Support – Chief Cowger

Chief Cowger thanked all the IAFC staff that helps support the section.

Election Committee Report – Chief Florentino

Chief Florentino reviewed the 2020 VCOS Election Results. 6 applications were received for the election with 5 eligible. 620 VCOS members voted (32% of eligible voters).

The following chiefs were elected to 3-year terms:

- Chief Jim Cook, Loudoun County (VA) Fire & Rescue
- Chief Charles Flynn, Suffield (CT) Fire Department
- Chief Kevin Hardwick, Glendale (OH) Fire Department

Motion by Chief Cowger and seconded by Chief Rush to accept the election results as presented. Motion carried.

Swearing-in of VCOS Positions – President Ludwig

President Ludwig swore in the newly elected officers. Both President Ludwig and First Vice President Carrizzo spoke to the group and thanked VCOS for all their great work. Chair

Flynn thanked President Ludwig for his leadership during challenging times. President Ludwig thanked Chief Catrambone and Chief Collins for their participation on the "If You Don't Feel Well, Don't Make it Your Farewell" committee and the COVID-19 task force respectively.

International Director's Report – Chief Black

Chief Black gave an update on the International Association of Fire Chiefs Board of Directors activities. She thanked Chief Ludwig for his leadership during the past year. Projections are showing that the IAFC will be in the black financially by the end of the year. They continue to monitor the budget. Membership is down slightly, but not as bad as anticipated. The ReIGNITE conference will be in October. An update on the Women Fire Chiefs Council was provided. They have a meeting later this afternoon. They are looking for new co-chairs. Then she announced some resources available through the National Volunteer Workforce Solutions SAFER grant. There is an online scenario-based training focused on inclusion available in the IAFC Academy. In addition, in a few weeks, a new *Guide to Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department* will be released. Chief Black mentioned this is her last meeting on the VCOS Board as she will be the IAFC Second Vice President. She thanked VCOS for all their support and hard work to further the IAFC's mission.

VCOS Supporter – Chief Oettel

Chief Oettel thanked all the VCOS supporters over the years. The work of the VCOS could not be accomplished without the dedication of our sponsors and supporters. He highlighted the top 10 sponsors that contribute to the VCOS and encouraged VCOS members to use their services.

Lavender Ribbon Report and Cancer Initiatives – Chief Collins

Chief Collins presented on cancer prevention efforts by the VCOS and the joint efforts of the VCOS and the NVFC. He recognized the importance of the partnership to create the Lavender Ribbon Report and the efforts of both organizations to expand upon the project through creating an education course, webinars and posters together. There have been 4 webinars this year so far as part of a 6-part series.

New & Interim Chief Guidance – Chief Al Yancey

Chief Yancey described the creation process and the importance and value of the *You're the Fire Chief; Now What? – Guidance for New and Interim Fire Chiefs* created in partnership with the Executive Fire Officers Section. It was launched at FRI 2019. Webinars were conducted in early 2020. A downloadable report is available on www.vcos.org.

Accomplishments 2019-2020 – Chief Cowger

Chief Cowger reviewed VCOS accomplishments since the 2019 annual meeting including the following:

- Released Quarterly E-Newsletter and Monthly Report from the Chair E-blast
- Held a successful Symposium in the Sun – 700 attendees; 520 full paid
- Conducted VCOS February Board Meeting in Rogers, AR
- Participated on the IAFC COVID Taskforce and IAFC Economic Taskforce
- Projects with Volunteer Workforce Solutions:
 - Refresh of Beyond Hoses and Helmets

- Online Volunteer Administrative Leadership Series (VALS) and In-person Recruitment & Retention Coordinator Certification Course
- Diversity and Inclusion Online Scenario-based Training (available now on the IAFC Academy) and the Guide to Creating an Inclusive Department (coming VERY soon)

Government Relations Updates – Chief Flynn

Chief Flynn summarized some of the Government Relations efforts and successes including updates on the CARES Act, Economic Disaster Impact Loans, AFG Supplemental COVID Grants, the 4th COVID Relief Package, the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act, Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021 Funding, and PSOB/COVID Legislation (Safeguarding America’s First Responders Act).

Online Training Scholarships – Chief Flynn

The National VWS SAFER grant is offering online scholarships to Tim Shurr’s “Mesmerizing Leadership” for volunteers. Contact Kaitlin Lutz at klutz@iafc.org by August 30.

Ribbon Report Updates – Chief Cook

Chief Cook explained that VCOS is working to update the Yellow Ribbon Report focused on mental wellness. It will include more implementable recommendations. That should be ready later this year. VCOS is also updating the Red Ribbon Report on transitioning department type. It will have more detailed information and also include a section on working with elected officials. VCOS is working with Volunteer Workforce Solutions on training to go with this through a SAFER grant. There will be in-person and online training based on the information in the Red Ribbon Report.

Get Involved – Chief Rush

Chief Rush stated that as of July VCOS has 2,438 members. VCOS is distributing quarterly e-newsletters. We are always looking for articles. Email him if you’d like to contribute.

Treasurer/Secretary’s Report – Chief Windisch

Chief Windisch reviewed the finances of the VCOS. 2019 was a very busy year, but things have slowed down this year due to COVID-19, etc. The General Fund for 2019 was slightly over, but not much. There was no activity in 2019 for FROG and Leading the Transition courses. Symposium in the Sun 2019 profit was \$74K. We are currently monitoring 2020 Symposium in the Sun, but there is a strong possibility it might not occur. We could consider doing some type of virtual event, but we are still evaluating that. Symposium in the West/Spring has lost money the last several years. With cancelling this year’s Symposium in the Spring, we lost about \$18K. We are unsure of the future of Symposium in the Spring.

The Pierce fund is doing well. It is used for education and other VCOS special projects. Pierce donates \$100 of each apparatus sold to a volunteer/combination department and has been doing so since 1999. Thanks to Pierce for their support.

On May 1, VCOS submitted a revised 2020 budget to the IAFC Treasurer due to COVID-19 with less revenue and expenses projected. VCOS still has money and reserves in the bank so we are financially stable.

VCOS Educational Opportunities – Chief Collins

Chief Collins reviewed all the VCOS educational courses. Many have been put on hold due to COVID-19. We are trying to do more webinars instead.

Training Officer Award – Chief Collins

The 2020 Training Officer Award winner is Deputy Chief Karl Neubecker of Ellington Fire Department (CT). Congratulations! Usually the award is presented at FRI, but we will aim to present it at Symposium in the Sun (or next year at one of the IAFC/VCOS conferences if this year isn't possible). Thanks to TargetSolutions for sponsoring this award. There were about 50 applications received.

Awards and Scholarships – Chief Catrambone

Chief Catrambone reviewed the various VCOS awards and scholarships. It is a great way to get involved and get to these great conferences like FRI and Symposium in the Sun and Spring. We encourage you to apply in the future.

VCOS Business – Chief Flynn

There was no old business or new business brought up.

Good of the Order – Chief Flynn

Chief Cowger thanked President Ludwig, First Vice President Carrizzo, and incoming Second Vice President Chief Black. Chief Hardwick is the newest VCOS board member to join and Chief Flynn welcomed him to the group. He is excited to serve. Chief Flynn thanked Chief Collins for his time on the VCOS Board. Chief Collins said it has been an honor to serve VCOS and he will continue to work with VCOS in other ways.

Closing Comments – Chief Flynn

Please get involved if you aren't already. Thanks for your continued support of the VCOS. This meeting has been recorded for later viewing. There was a moment of silence for all those affected by COVID-19.

**Motion by Chief Oettel and seconded by Chief Catrambone to adjourn the meeting.
Motion Passed.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:58pm ET.