



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

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VCOS Monthly Board Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

2:00 p.m. Eastern/1:00 p.m. Central/12:00 p.m. Mountain/11:00 a.m. Pacific

MINUTES

Present: Chief Rich Cowger, Chief Jim Cook, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Kevin Hardwick, Chief Brita Horn, Chief Paul Sterling, Chief Al Yancey, Chief Charles Flynn, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Jason Catrambone

Absent: None

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen

The call started at 2:03 PM.

Welcome/Chair's Report –Chief Flynn

Chief Flynn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Motion by Chief Cowger and seconded by Chief Hardwick to approve the August meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Vice Chair's Report – Chief Cowger

Nothing to report.

International Director's Report – Chief Catrambone

Chief Catrambone briefed the board on some of the legislative issues that were discussed on the IAFC Board meeting yesterday. The infrastructure bill is being worked on which includes funding for fire station construction, Next Gen 911 and wildland. Watching for possible vaccine mandates from CMS and OSHA coming out in October.

Treasurer's Report – Chief Windisch

No update at this time.

Communications Committee

The newsletter was released at the end of August. Chief Rush had to cancel the meeting scheduled last week between the Communications Committee and the roundtable chiefs to work on the communications strategy as outlined in the Strategic Direction document. It will be rescheduled.

August Pierce Marketing Meeting – Chiefs Cowger and Windisch

Chief Cowger stated that the meeting went very well overall. Pierce rolled out the red carpet and were great hosts. Pierce's marketing experts met with the group. VCOS is looking into contracting with that marketing company. They submitted a proposal, and the Executive Committee is reviewing it and will get more information before it goes to the full VCOS board. Chief Windisch added that the contract would take at least six months to complete the tasks. Ideally, we could start some of the tasks at Symposium in the Sun.

Chiefs Hardwick and Cook were impressed with the meeting and the marketing group. They think we can accomplish a lot with their assistance.

This will add value to the IAFC as a whole. We will have to see if the IAFC board will support this or not.

Symposium in the Sun – Chief Windisch

There are 350 paid attendees. The Hilton is most likely full. We started advertising the coaching sessions. Chief Flynn reported on who he plans to give the 2021 Chair's award to. We also need to still give out the 2019 Chair's Award to Denis O'Neil and Dennis Compton.

Educational Programs Update

The Lavender Ribbon Report Update is in the final stages with the graphic designer. VCOS will have 1,000 copies printed – 500 will go to Symposium in the Sun. The goal for the Yellow Ribbon Report is to launch it at Symposium in the Sun.

The Facebook live Lavender Ribbon Report Update went well earlier today. Chiefs Flynn and Buckman participated.

Chief Collins reported that there will be a FROG class in Virginia after the 1st of the year.

Chief Flynn and Spencer Cheatham will be doing a presentation at the NVFC Recruitment/Retention Conference coming up.

BH&H has a few classes scheduled for later this year.

Old Business

The Strategic Direction document was posted to the VCOS website and the mission/vision were updated on the website as well.

Chief Rush will reschedule the Communication Strategy meeting that was cancelled last week.

Chief Yancey will call Chief Horn about the new member meeting at Symposium in the Sun.

New Business

No new business to report.

Roundtable, Announcement, and Committee Updates

Collins: The COVID Taskforce is still meeting regularly. They are looking into how many firefighters are refusing vaccines and/or leaving their jobs due to it. He asked the VCOS Board to give an update on what is happening in their departments and regions/states. The Board gave updates on their respective areas.

Hardwick: Still representing VCOS on the safety initiative for emergency vehicles project. He will be going to Firehouse Expo in Columbus.

Sterling: Copied and pasted below from his written report he emailed.

- As I reported at the August Board Meeting, I have been working with Spencer Cheatham, Program Manager for Volunteer Work Solutions - IAFC and the leadership from the Delaware Fire Service to bring the *Recruitment and Retention Coordinator Certification Course* to Delaware. I am pleased to report that we have finalized the logistics and details. The course will be conducted at the Delaware Fire School in Dover, on November 6 and 7. The flyer, created by Spencer, has been widely distributed throughout Delaware.
- I attended the LODD Funeral for Firefighter Cecilia Escobar-Duplan (Wilmington Manor VFC (DE) on Thursday September 2, 2021. FF Escobar-Duplan was struck and killed by a motor vehicle while rendering aid at the scene of a collision.
- Since our last meeting, I have continued to promote nominations for the VCOS Awards and Scholarships at Symposium in the Sun in November throughout the Eastern Division and various fire service organizations.
- **2021 SAFER Grant Announcement** - The Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA) and the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association (MFCA) application for a 2021 SAFER grant was approved. This four-year, \$2.36 million dollar grant will be a joint effort between the State Association and Maryland Fire Chiefs to bring several, much-needed recruitment and retention projects and initiatives to the fire service of Maryland. Projects for the MSFA include the hiring of a full-time recruiter for the State along with three additional regional coordinators that will work directly with the Executive Director and staff and recruitment and retention committee to create a state-wide mentorship program, hold several recruitment and retention workshops, develop a new online customizable marketing platform for departments, updates to all of our websites, videos, and social media pages, and much more! The Maryland Fire Chiefs will once again offer state-of-the-art, relevant leadership training across the State.
- The Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association 100th Annual Convention began on Monday 9/12 and concludes on Friday 9/12. The event is being held at the Chase Center in Wilmington.
- I will be participating in an Eastern Division - IAFC Board meeting on Monday night 9/20/21 at 1900 hours (EST). The meeting will be conducted via Zoom. Each of you

are invited to join the meeting if you would like, even if just to say hi. If you might be interested, just let me know and I will transmit the meeting link.

Cook: The awards/scholarships numbers are disappointing. We need to continue to promote them.

Cowger: It has been a long fire season so far. He is looking forward to winter.

Catrambone: Recently Florida approved \$1,000 for volunteers.

The call ended at 2:44PM.