



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



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VCOS Board of Directors Meeting

February 9-10, 2018

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

MINUTES

Friday, February 9 (at Alderney Landing Halifax Fire and Emergency Headquarters – 40 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia)

Present: Chairman Timothy Wall, Chief Donna Black, Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Charles Flynn, Chief Richard Cowger, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Ed Rush, Chief James Seavey, Chief Jim Cook

Guests: Mr. Joe Giorgi, Mr. Barry Balliet, Mr. Jeff Siegrist, Mr. Ulrich Mauser, Chief Ken Stuebing, Ms. Beth VanGorder and rotating guests see document following minutes

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen, Ms. Jennifer Bragiel Cozad

The meeting started at 9:00 am.

Introduction and Welcome of Guests – Chairman Wall

Chairman Wall started the meeting and said a few welcoming remarks. He thanked Chief Ken Stuebing and Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency for hosting the VCOS board meeting. He introduced himself and asked those present to introduce themselves.

Chair's Report – Chairman Wall

Chairman Wall began the Chair's Report with an update on CFSI. He informed everyone that a table has been purchased. He asked which board members were interested in attending the event. Chairman Wall, Chief Collins, Chief Cowger, Chief Rush, Chief Catrambone, Chief Black and Chief Flynn expressed an interest in going.

Action Item: Remaining board members to think about the event and respond with their attendance by the March call.

Chairman Wall informed the board that he will be doing a presentation at CFSI along with IAFC staff from the National VWS grant.

Chairman Wall asked Chief Black to update the board on the IAFC's strategic planning meeting March 14-15. She informed the board that the Women Fire Chiefs Council, IDELP, and representatives from each of the sections will be there. The next IAFC Board of Directors meeting will be immediately following the IAFC's strategic planning meeting. The floor was opened to discussion on the strategic planning

meeting and the corresponding IAFC Member Survey that was sent out. Many board members expressed that the questions drove individuals to a specific answer.

Chairman Wall transitioned into discussion on the Division Secretaries' Minutes. He explained this meeting is a way to improve communication between sections and divisions. He informed the board that during the meeting he mentioned Symposium in the West and Symposium in the Sun. All the secretaries will be added to mailing lists to help the various divisions and sections know what each other is doing.

Chairman Wall raised the point that Ms. Joelle Fishkin has completed her last newsletter for the VCOS. He asked everyone to sign a card of appreciation for all her years of volunteer service to the VCOS. He pointed out that Ms. Fishkin is also a life member of the IAFC. Chief Rush requested the board do more than send a card, as Ms. Fishkin did a lot of work for the VCOS and was greatly valued. The board members agreed and discussed their options.

Motion by Chief Seavey and seconded by Chief Flynn to make a donation of \$100 in her name to a charity she supports and to send her a new VCOS pullover. Motion carried.

Vice Chair's Report – Chief Flynn

Chief Flynn began his report with an update on the final report tied to the Yellow Ribbon project. The group will be meeting in April to finalize the report. He also informed the board that Florida recently passed a bill recognizing mental health for first responders.

Chief Flynn transitioned into discussing the Step Up and Stand Out program with Kidde and informed the group that discussions on the program start next month.

The board had several questions for Chief Flynn pertaining to the Yellow Ribbon Report. Chairman Wall inquired about the vision for the report and the timeline to conclude the project. Chief Flynn explained the final report is based on the member focus group that occurred at Symposium in the Sun and creating a train the trainer type packet. He will have a more definitive timeline for completion following the meeting in April to finalize the document. Chief Seavey mentioned that Mr. Scott Beecher and Mr. Bob Logan are interested in attending the meeting.

Action Item: Chief Flynn to send the official dates of the April meeting to Chief Seavey.

Chairman Wall updated the board that he noticed the carousel on the IAFC homepage had an older VCOS project on it. He requested it to be changed to the Yellow Ribbon Report. He reminded the board that if they see something that needs to be changed on the IAFC or VCOS websites to send him a note and he will work with the IAFC staff to see if it can be changed.

Chairman Wall asked about the benefit of the Step Up and Stand Out program. Chief Flynn explained that he has not measured it, but the cost of the program is relatively low and it helps get the word out about volunteers and the VCOS.

International Director's Report – Chief Black

Chief Black updated the VCOS board about the IAFC's Board of Directors December meeting in Arkansas. She explained that the Executive Fire Officers are seeking to get a board seat and a committee was created to think about the process and requirements to obtain a board seat.

Chief Black transitioned into a discussion on the Small Pilot Program. The board decided to discontinue the program after making many contacts but receiving no new memberships. Chief Black expressed her hope to see a similar program but have it different in some ways or executed differently. Chief Cowger expressed his frustration with the way the program was executed in his state. He explained that it started,

while his state was dealing with terrible wildland fires. He also felt that expectations for what he was supposed to be doing were not clear. He expressed concern that the program did more harm than good, as it spammed individuals with emails causing many people to remove themselves from IAFC e-blast lists. Many board members expressed a desire to revisit the program but execute it differently. Several board members recommended reaching out to Mr. Terry Monroe for feedback and advice before developing a new plan and strategy to target small department pilots.

Action Item: Chairman Wall to call Mr. Monroe and inform him about the small department pilot outreach discussion that occurred at the February board meeting.

The discussion shifted to Chief Black's update on the EFO section seeking a board seat. Chief Windisch raised several concerns and asked if there is a path to approve a section. Chief Black explained that the IAFC board is looking at a bigger discussion on what it takes to get a board seat. Chief Wall inquired who is on the committee looking into the process of gaining an IAFC board seat. Chief Black responded Chief Dan Eggleston, Chief Billy Goldfeder, Chief Jerry Rhodes and Chief Timothy Schabbel.

Chief Black shifted the discussion to changes with the IAFC leadership. She informed the board that Mr. David Nuckols is the acting COO for the foreseeable future, and that Ms. Karin Fitzgerald is no longer with the IAFC.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report and Budget Discussion – Chief Collins

Chief Collins included a financial report from the 4th Quarter of 2017 in the board packet. He reviewed the 2018 budget with the board. He explained that it looks like staff time will go over budget in 2017, the main culprit for this being an increase in the amount charged for staff time that was not taken into account when creating the budget.

Chief Windisch inquired what went into the line item donations and sponsorships. Chief Collins explained it includes support like the support from Target Solutions. It does not include Pierce or Paratech.

Several board members expressed concern about the VCOS ending the year with too much profit. Chief Black requested an actual Profit and Loss budget be created to show a better picture and understanding of the financial situation of the VCOS. Chief Collins explained that net assets grew by approximately \$40,000.

Chief Black inquired if it is possible to talk to the CFO or auditors about placing Symposium in the Sun on the next fiscal year's budget, as the VCOS only has 1 month to spend any additional income from the conference before it rolls over into net assets. Chief Collins explained he does not believe this is a possibility, but he is seeing changes, clarifications and new guidance from the IAFC. Last week, the policy that net assets could not be used for travel expenses for one-time projects changed.

Chief Rush asked if the VCOS could budget a deficit. Chief Collins explained it could not, and that the VCOS must submit an explanation for every line item it goes over budget on.

Chief Collins transitioned to the detailed budget discussion. He began with a general overview of the budget and its layout. There was a discussion on whether it is policy or practice to keep a minimum of \$100,000 in each fund. Chief Windisch recalled the vote to make it official policy and sent the policy to the board.

Chief Rush inquired if the board should budget more aggressively, to slow the growth of net assets. Chief Collins explained that the dues fund is not growing, and that the Pierce fund is growing because they are donating more money than Beyond Helmets & Hoses is spending. He advised that there is an opportunity to use the educational funds, but the board must get approval from Pierce prior to spending any of the funds.

Chief Black inquired if the board is adding to the net assets in the dues fund. Chief Collins explained that a deficit is always budgeted, but Symposium in the Sun and Symposium in the West tend to bring in more profit than budgeted. This does go into the net assets. Chief Collins also emphasized that he has been seeing many positive changes and has developed a good working relationship with Chief Richard Carrizzo.

Chief Collins provided an overview on net assets and how they can be used. He also explained that net asset does not grow until the end of the year and are based on the VCOS's actuals. He also explained the process for utilizing net assets for unbudgeted mid-year one-time projects that arise. Chief Wall emphasized Chief Collins explanation by stating that if a project does come up the VCOS can do the project. The process to use net assets does not slow the project down, as it allows the VCOS to get approval to do the project in a timely manner.

Chief Seavey inquired if there is an IAFC policy that prohibits sections from investing. Chief Collins explained that he did believe there was a policy prohibiting this, but needed to get clarification on the details of the policy.

Chief Wall requested Chief Collins to explain the deadlines and a timeline for the process of creating the VCOS budget. Chief Collins referenced the timeline submitted in the board packet and highlighted that all budget requests need to be to the treasurer by May 30, a draft budget will be sent to the executive committee by June 30, and that the updated draft budget will be discussed by the VCOS board at the VCOS annual meeting.

Mr. Barry Balliet expressed that the current financial situation of the VCOS is positive. It shows that they have saved for the inevitable rainy day. Should a financial down turn happen they will be able to pull through it. He pointed out that the financial situation of the VCOS is positive for members, because they do not have to see dues increase and the VCOS has funds to put towards additional projects.

Chief Collins inquired when the friends and supporters needed a draft budget by for their own budgets. Mr. Joe Giorgi explained that the sooner the better, but if he could receive an idea of the budget by the first week of August it would be helpful. Mr. Balliet expressed that his budget is constantly changing, but the discussion is an important one to have. Mr. Jeff Siegrist emphasized the earlier he can get the information the better.

The discussion shifted to concerns about finding funding if an unknown problem arises, and if it is possible to create a contingency fund for these circumstances. Chief Black provided the example of the section needing a significantly higher amount of staff time than budgeted. Several board members recommended discussing with the IAFC board to see if they would allow a contingency budget for specific sections meeting specific criteria. Ms. Kelly Ameen inquired what happens if the VCOS goes over budget. Chief Collins explained that it would come out of net assets but would require justification to the IAFC. Chief Black emphasized that a contingency fund is not needed, because if the VCOS goes over budget the VCOS can justify the utilization of net assets.

Chief Windisch raised the point that for projects it is a manpower issue not a money issue. The board has a limited amount of manpower for new projects and needs to be concerned about taking on too many projects. Chief Collins agreed that the VCOS has the funds to take on new projects but needs to think about the time commitment and if they have the manpower for each new project.

Chief Cook asked if there is a form for project requests. Chief Collins responded that there is not one currently, but he would like to create one.

Action Item: Chief Collins is to work with Ms. Bragiel Cozad to create a draft timeline for the budget, a draft mid-year one-time project form and a process for one-time project requests for the VCOS board by the May board meeting.

The Future of the VCOS – Chief Buckman

Chief Buckman called into the meeting using WebEx and began his presentation by updating the board that a VCOS Member Survey was developed and submitted to the membership. Chief Buckman laid out the timeline for the VCOS member survey. The survey will remain open for 15 days, and then it will take him 30 days to tabulate and interpret the results.

Action Item: Chief Buckman is to submit the results of the VCOS member survey for the 2018 May board meeting.

Chief Buckman continued his presentation by discussing meetings and the need to spend time more efficiently and productively. He discussed how one method to do this is to change how the board writes their agenda. He asked the question how does the VCOS get its board members to be prepared for the meeting. He offered a few options for the board to consider that may help them prepare for the meeting, resulting in a more efficient and productive meeting. These options included sending the agenda earlier, changing the agenda format, defining objectives for each meeting, and specifying what actions will be taken. He emphasized that it is about making instrumental changes that will help the board focus. It is not about making drastic changes in the way the meetings are conducted.

Chief Buckman moved on to discuss funding. He emphasized the importance of understanding funding and the goals behind it. He remarked that the VCOS should be thinking 2-3 years to the future with funding and creating specific proposals and plans. He prompted the board to identify why they need the money, what they want the money for, their plan for utilizing the money, and explain the outcome of the funding. Mr. Siegrist added that one of his biggest issues is when those asking for funding always go to the obvious donors or sponsors. In most cases, these companies are already spread thin supporting similar projects and programs. He challenged the VCOS to be creative when looking for sponsors or donors.

Chief Black inquired if the IAFC had someone or a process to go through, when looking for new sponsors. Ms. Ameen explained that the IAFC is trying to improve and clarify the process, but Ms. Leslie Distler needs to be included in the process with any sponsors or donors. Chief Stuebing warned the VCOS board to proceed with caution when looking at obtaining new sponsors and donors. He recommended including Ms. Distler sooner rather than later in the process.

Chief Buckman emphasized the need to recognize that the VCOS is in competition for funding, and the importance in ensuring the VCOS is getting enough funding. He continued to explain that they must consider their relationships and how new or different funding will impact current relationships across the board. Chief Stuebing echoed Chief Buckman emphasizing the importance of brand and thinking about who the VCOS associates with and how this will impact the brand and relationships of the organization and the IAFC.

Chief Buckman transitioned the discussion to the VCOS membership. He opened the floor to Chief Windisch to discuss his findings. Chief Windisch explained that the VCOS has done many different things to increase membership, but the number of members doesn't seem to change significantly. Chief Buckman emphasized the importance of ensuring the current members are happy. Mr. Siegrist commented that the VCOS's efforts will be better spent focusing on providing value and meeting current members' expectations and needs. He pointed out that this can lead into the membership promoting the VCOS. A lively discussion took place about looking at targeting IAFC volunteer and combination members that are not VCOS members and expanding its focus to international volunteer and combination departments. The board also consider why the current VCOS members are members and looking closer at their members and non-members. They wondered how the VCOS membership would change, if the VCOS board began making certain materials free only to members and began charging non-members. The discussion concluded with an emphasis on the quality of the VCOS members and the importance of having an engaged and active membership over a large membership.

Chief Buckman introduced the topic of succession planning. He prompted the group for an open discussion by asking how the VCOS ensures the future of the organization and continues to have high quality board members. Several chiefs emphasized the importance of keeping the membership engaged and providing quality and valuable products, as this sets the tone for the board. Chief Windisch voiced concern over the number of candidates that ran in 2017. Chief Black recommended adding to the candidates' applications to help ensure strong candidates by gathering more information.

Chief Buckman refocused the discussion to an internal focus on succession planning. Chief Black pointed out the need to have some continuity in the board, and the need to recognize that the board can easily change from year to year. Chief Flynn emphasized that it will no longer be likely for someone to hold a position for 10 or more years. An energetic discussion on term limits and possible extensions of the amount of terms for officers took place. Some chiefs felt term limits would hurt the continuity and the strength of the board, while others felt they would help bring in fresh ideas and help encourage more members to get involved. Mr. Siegrist emphasized that the current VCOS board structure allows them to be nimble and that they have seen a tremendous amount of success and produced many valuable products. He pointed out that VCOS board members who joined in the past for the title did not stick around, because the VCOS board sets a high standard for being on the board.

Chief Catrambone inquired how to prevent members from becoming deterred if they are unable to make the board despite several tries. A discussion took place on possible solutions to this problem. Chief Buckman helped focus the discussion by asking the board to identify what is broken. He wrapped up the succession planning discussion by summing up where the discussion had taken the board: It is not about limiting who runs, but about better educating the membership about how to run and the expectations of board members.

Chief Buckman's final topic for his presentation was a discussion about the number of in-person meetings the VCOS conducts every year. Many chiefs emphasized the importance of having the 4 meetings but expressed their desire to condense the meetings and make them more efficient. A few chiefs thought another stand-alone meeting like the February meeting could be beneficial.

Remarks by conference call from IAFC President Chief Thomas Jenkins and Chief Ken Stuebing

Chairman Wall welcomed President Jenkins via conference call to the meeting and introduced him to the group. He expressed the VCOS's appreciation and gratitude for President Jenkins making time to speak with the VCOS board.

President Jenkins thanked the VCOS board for being included in the call and provided an overview of his and the IAFC's efforts. He specifically spoke to finding common ground and working with the IAFF, building and expanding international relationships, and modernizing how the organization communicates with its membership. He concluded his statement by announcing the strategic direction meeting in Leesburg, VA and emphasizing the meetings importance in ensuring continuity throughout the entire organization.

Chairman Wall introduced Chief Stuebing and invited him to present to the board. Chief Stuebing thanked President Jenkins for his remarks and the VCOS for allowing him to host their February board meeting. He emphasized the importance of working strategically and together to build the fire service of the future. He pointed out the struggle of gaining volunteers and emphasized that to get people to participate, an organization must provide value and not waste peoples' time. Chief Stuebing concluded by challenging the VCOS board to think outside the box.

The floor was opened for questions. Chairman Wall inquired about the dates of the conference to be held in Bahrain mentioned by President Jenkins. President Jenkins explained that the conference will be April 10-12 and has an impressive agenda. Many of the chiefs expressed their gratitude to President Jenkins for being on the call and to Chief Stuebing for hosting the VCOS.

Updates from our Friends

Mr. Siegrist updated the VCOS board about the internal succession planning happening within Provident. They have a very young and talented group of professionals coming through the ranks. He recognized Mr. Balliet and Mr. Mauser for their efforts in preparing the newer employees for the future. He concluded by thanking Chief Stuebing for his hospitality and for hosting the meeting.

Mr. Giorgi thanked the board for the opportunity and Chief Stuebing and Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency for their hospitality and all their hard work putting the meeting together.

Chairman Wall asked the friends if there was anything they felt like the VCOS was missing. Mr. Giorgi responded that it is important to always be looking to the future. What the next big thing will be is hard to predict, so it is important to think about how the organization will address it and if it can address it quickly.

Chief Rush inquired how the new cancer legislation that recently passed in New York will work. Mr. Giorgi explained that it is a new insurance mandate. This will require Provident and VFIS to develop policies that meet the New York policy's criteria. It will be a financial burden that will need to be budgeted. Mr. Siegrist emphasized the difficulty to get the developed policies approved by the state.

Chairman Wall thanked the friends for their remarks and everything they do for the VCOS.

Consent Agenda

- Homeland Security Committee - Chief Richards
- Workplace Bullying/Harassment/Violence Prevention Taskforce – Chief Larson
- FRI Planning Committee – Chief Black and Chief Whitham
- NACO – Chief Singer
- Leadership Employee Collaboration – Chief Struble
- NFPA 1720 Committee – Chief Render
- Beyond Hoses and Helmets – Chief Render
- Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments – Chief Cheves
- EMS Modernization Project – Chief Hughes
- On Fire Leadership Webinar Series – Chief Lambert
- Commission on Professional Credentialing
- Federal Regulators Toolkit – Chief Shank
 - Budgeted item of \$6,000
- Fire Rescue Organizational Guidance

Chief Seavey requested the 10 cancer commandments to be moved to the consent agenda. Chief Black shared a clarification on the process of approving the cancer commandments. She explained Safety, Health and Survival had to give approval, and that the 10 cancer commandments did not need the IAFC board's approval. She emphasized that the VCOS board needed to see the final poster. Chairman Wall approved the movement of the 10 cancer commandment to the consent agenda.

Chief Collins stated the need to clean up the format of the committee reports.

Action Item: Chief Collins to work with Ms. Bragiel Cozad to update the committee report form and to create a separate budget request form or section of the form.

There was discussion on whether the approval of the reports also approved the requests. The consensus was that approval of the reports was the accepting of the reports and not approving any requests within the reports.

Motion by Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Rush to approve the committee reports of the consent agenda with no additional financial obligations to the VCOS board. Motion carried.

Executive Session

Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Flynn to go into executive session. Motion carried.

Motion by Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Catrambone to leave executive session. Motion carried.

Chairman Wall appointed Chief Brett Waters, Chief Florentino and Chief Collins to the election committee.

Motion by Chief Black and seconded by Chief Cowger to have Ms. Heather Schafer submit the 10 cancer commandments poster to Chief Black and Chairman Wall for approval by them. Motion carried.

Motion by Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Cowger to recess until February 10, 2018 at 9:00am. Motion carried.

The meeting recessed February 9, 2018 at 3:54pm.

The meeting was called back to order February 10, 2018 at 8:54am.

Meet and Greet with the Invited Canadian Fire Chiefs

Chief Flynn welcomed and thanked the VCOS board and the Canadian guests for attending the meet and greet. He invited each individual to introduce themselves. Chief Flynn welcomed Ms. Beth VanGorder to present Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency and the Canadian volunteer fire service.

Ms. VanGorder thanked the VCOS board for the opportunity to present to them and provided an exceptional overview of Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency and the Canadian volunteer fire service. She highlighted the challenges they face: higher standards, declining and aging populations in rural areas, and communication issues. She discussed Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency's recruitment strategy to target women, black communities, aboriginal communities, immigrants and baby boomers. She explained one success they have seen called Camp Courage. It is an emergency services camp for young women. This camp has encouraged many women to go into public service professions and to volunteer with the department.

Ms. VanGorder provided an overview of some of the things the department does to help retain its members including: annual banquets, setting clear expectations upfront, thank you letters for years of service, advancement and leadership opportunities, and an annual honorarium.

Chairman Wall inquired if they had any junior programs. Ms. VanGorder explained that Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency had junior programs in the past but does not currently have one. Chief Flynn shared about the Connecticut youth program that takes place at the Connecticut Fire Academy. It is a week-long program, where the youth are treated just like they would be if they were in recruit school. This has been very successful and caused many youths to pursue a career in emergency and public service. Chief MacKenzie spoke on his youth program that has graduated over 1,400 children. He explained that these youth firefighters tend to stay longer than other firefighters. The program has also encouraged many young women to join the department. His department's youth program focuses on youth in their last two years of high school and has influenced many youths to seek a community oriented or military career.

Chief Seavey shared the success Maryland has seen with college live-in programs. The most successful programs tend to be very close to the university. The students are given free room and board, a \$15 per day stipend for food and \$2000 tuition reimbursement.

Chief Collins inquired if Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency accepted support volunteers. Ms. VanGorder explained that they do have support members, typically these are older volunteers that no longer want to respond.

Chief Flynn welcomed Chief Black and Chief Cowger to present the VCOS. Chief Cowger began the presentation by explaining what attracted him to the VCOS. For him the VCOS showed him departments that had similarities with him despite being from a small department. This is a section that is focused on sharing innovative solutions and helping each other out. The idea of the VCOS is to learn from each other and exchange ideas. Chief Cowger invited Chief Collins to provide an overview and explanation of FROG: Fire Rescue Organizational Guidance and Chief Windisch to provide an overview and explanation of ISO and You and Beyond Hoses and Helmets.

Chief Black began her portion of the presentation with how much of a difference the VCOS conferences have made for her and her department. Chief Black invited Chief Windisch to provide an overview of Symposium in the Sun and Chief Collins to provide an overview of Symposium in the West. Chief Cowger shared that Symposium in the Sun and Symposium in the West are better conferences for him, because it is focused on volunteer and combination specific topics and allows him to network with departments like his.

Chief Black transitioned the presentation to provide explanations of recent VCOS projects. Chief Black provided an overview on FSTAR's Healthcare Provider's Guide to Firefighter Physicals and the Be Inclusive posters. She invited Chief Flynn to provide an overview of Step Up and Stand Out, Chief Seavey to present on the efforts to combat cancer in the fire service, and Ms. Ameen to explain the VCOS USBs and its content. Chief Flynn added that the USBs would not exist and that the VCOS cannot do everything it does without the sponsors' support. He thanked them for all their assistance.

Chief Black and Chief Cowger concluded their presentation by emphasizing that everything the VCOS does is for the benefit of the fire service and encouraging everyone present to get involved if they are not already. They thanked Chief Stuebing and Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency for their hospitality and for hosting the VCOS.

Chief MacKenzie explained the value of BH&H in Canada. He explained that he took a pilot course in Ontario that sold him on the program. He always hears from participants that it is the best course they have ever taken.

Chairman Wall provided an overview of the VCOS awards and scholarships available including: the John M. Buckman III Leadership Award sponsored by Provident Insurance, the Illness and Injury Prevention Award sponsored by VFIS, the Retention and Recruitment Award sponsored by VFIS, the Training Officer Award sponsored by TargetSolutions, the two new Symposium in the West scholarships, the Emerging Leader Scholarship sponsored by the Gasaway Consulting Group, the Robert T. Bettenhausen scholarship, and the VCOS Symposium in the Sun scholarship. Chairman Wall thanked all of the sponsors for their support.

Chairman Wall welcomed Chief Bell to present an overview of the Canadian Volunteer Fire Service Association (CVFSA), and all the work they do. Chief Bell explained that the association is relatively young but is very active in promoting fire service topics and utilizing Canadian and US speakers to provide enriched programs. He provided an overview of the CVFSA's lifetime achievement award. This award recognizes an individual in the Canadian fire service and makes donations to their community and their department in their name totaling around \$50,000. These donations are typically needed equipment or apparatus to the department and food to a local food bank. CVFSA works with the winner to create the best donation based on the winner's community and department needs. Chief Bell also provided an

overview of the CVFSA's board make up and membership. Chairman Wall thanked Chief Bell for his presentation.

Chairman Wall introduced and welcomed Chief MacKenzie to present the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC). He explained that the CAFC has made it a main objective to focus their efforts on serving volunteer and composite departments in Canada. It is currently working to develop a country wide recruitment program with a depository of marketing materials for departments. He invited everyone to help collect materials and to participate in the project. Chairman Wall thanked Chief MacKenzie for his presentation.

Discussion and Action Items:

FRI Update – Chief Wall

Chief Wall informed the board that the NVFC requested a meeting with the VCOS. He explained that the VCOS is getting the NVFC a room at no cost to the NVFC. Any charges other than the room the NVFC will be responsible.

Chief Wall updated the board that the VCOS has one presentation tentatively approved for FRI, and that the VCOS Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled to be Thursday, August 9 2-3pm at FRI in Dallas, TX. Ms. Ameen recommended the board consider having the board dinner on a different night than usual to avoid conflicting with an FRI event Thursday evening. Chairman Wall stated that the board will be conducting outreach to the Texas Fire Chiefs Association for the meeting.

National VWS SAFER Grants – Ms. Ameen, Chairman Wall, Chief Black

Chief Black provided an update on the National VWS grant. She explained that the National VWS staff assigned council members to pilots as mentors. The plan is for the council members to work one-on-one with their assigned pilots to help the pilots reach their goals. She expressed excitement to see the outcomes of the mentoring, as she feels it has been very productive and helpful.

Ms. Ameen updated the VCOS board on the National VWS's creation of a volunteer chief handbook, three online courses, and a meeting on the future of the volunteer fire service. She explained the handbook is expected to be completed by May 2018. The meeting on the future of the volunteer fire service will consist of a large group meeting with smaller break outs and the goal will be to create a report based on the meeting. Ms. Ameen expressed her appreciation at being able to use the BH&H and FROG courses for the grant and pointed out this has exposed the VCOS to new departments.

Ms. Ameen also updated the VCOS board on the VWS's goals for the next SAFER application period, which includes a new phase for Virginia, applying for a new state grant, and a new National phase.

Action Item: Chief Wall requested any VCOS board members interested in attending the National VWS meeting in September to email him and Ms. Bragiel Cozad.

Ms. Ameen provided an overview of the National 2 VWS training grant. She explained that this grant is creating a 10-module course and an instructor led course. The grant is planning to hold three in-person trainings but is still working on the details for these. The grant is currently working with an instructional designer to develop the modules. VWS will be looking to utilize the VCOS to review the course around the end of this year.

TargetSolutions Partnership Update – Chief Collins

Chief Collins informed the VCOS board that TargetSolutions has increased their level of support and would like to do an online course with the VCOS. The topic for the course is currently under discussion. Originally, the goal was to have the course ready by FRI 2018, but now it is looking like Symposium in the

Sun 2018. TargetSolutions has shifted their support away from Symposium in the West and will be providing more support for the Training Officer Award. The award recognizes an excellent training officer, pays for a full trip to FRI and is open to any IAFC member.

Symposium in the West – Chief Collins

Chief Collins updated the VCOS board that the registration is up to 33 registrants, which is slightly higher than last year at the same time. He reminded the VCOS board that there are 2 new scholarships available for Symposium in the West and that the board meeting will be Friday, May 4, the conference is May 3-5 in Phoenix, AZ. He asked the board to be as visible as possible during the meeting.

The theme for Symposium in the West will be *If not you then who? If not now then when?*. Chief Collins announced that Chief Compton will be the opening keynote, Paul Combs will be the second keynote, and that Chief Quinn will be presenting. Chief Collins concluded by informing the group that there is outreach happening to the Arizona Association of Fire Chiefs.

Chairman Wall inquired if the board should be thinking about Symposium in the West 2020 and 2021. Chief Collins responded that it would be best to wait until post Symposium in the West, so he can focus on the upcoming conference.

Symposium in the Sun – Chief Windisch

Chief Windisch updated the board that the final number of people at Symposium in the Sun 2017 was 679. He explained revenue increased, despite expenses being a little higher than expected. He emphasized the need to pay attention to food and beverage costs and speaker fees, as these are controllable expenses. Overall it was another successful year. The Symposium in the Sun Committee did a wonderful job.

Chief Windisch moved the discussion to Symposium in the Sun 2018, which does not currently have a theme. He explained the committee will begin meeting in March to plan it.

Action Item: Send any speaker recommendations to Chief Windisch.

Chief Collins inquired about the room block issue for Symposium in the Sun 2017. Chief Windisch explained that the issue had been taken care of. He also informed the board that Pier House 60 will not be a hotel for overflow in 2018. He reminded the board that in 2018 attendees will be required to register for the conference and will receive a code to use to get the group rate for their hotel reservation after registering.

Future conference dates:

- 2018 – Thurs. 11/8 – Sun. 11/11
- 2019 - Thurs. 11/9 – Sun. 11/12

Elections and Bylaws– Chief Collins (Election Chair – Chief Florentino)

Chairman Wall updated the board that the bylaws change was submitted and approved.

Chief Collins requested having a discussion on the International Director position to allow Chief Black to run for the board if she will not be continuing in the position.

Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Cowger to appoint Chief Black as the International Director for a full 2-year term. Motion carried.

Discussion on the motion. Many chiefs echoed that by deciding the International Director at the February meeting it sets a positive precedent that allows the individual an opportunity to run for a board position.

Chairman Wall thanked Chief Black for representing the VCOS and all of her hard work.

IAFC President Elections– Chief Wall and Chief Black

Chairman Wall reviewed that the IAFC candidates for president will be Chief Dan Eggleston, Albemarle County (Virginia) Fire and Rescue and Chief Gary Curmode, Eisenhower Tunnel/C-DOT (Colorado) Department. He informed the board that Chief Gary Ludwig, Champaign (Illinois) Fire Department is running unopposed for 1st Vice President. He reviewed that the candidate for 2nd Vice President will be:

- Chief Otto Drozd, Orange County (Florida) Fire and Rescue
- Chief Jeremy Moore, Broken Arrow (Oklahoma) Fire Department
- Chief Michael O'Brian, Brighton Area (Michigan) Fire Authority
- Chief Mark Piland, Frisco (Texas) Fire Department
- Chief Nathan Trauernicht, UC Davis (California) Fire Department
- Chief Porter (Chip) Welch, Scioto Township (Ohio) Fire Department

Voting opens May 10 and closes June 24. For more information and updates, visit the [IAFC Elections website](#).

Several chiefs expressed that the process for running needs to be reviewed. Chief Black emphasized the need to educate the membership on the process and what took place. Chief Windisch recommended allowing a grace period for fire chiefs that lose their position to allow them to run, while they search for a new position.

Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Cowger to table the discussion of the process of endorsing the 2nd Vice President for 2018 until executive session. Motion carried. (Motion rescinded in later motion)

There was discussion on creating a process for future endorsements. It was decided to discuss this topic further at a later date.

Cancer Initiative– Chief Seavey

Chief Seavey informed the board that Chief Collins was added to the committee as a liaison. He expressed astonishment at the speed the committee has been able to work.

Chief Seavey updated the board that the committee held its first webinar with 111 participants. He emphasized the excellent job Chief Lambert did in conducting the webinar. He also informed the board that the next webinar will be on the first 5 best practices in March and the second webinar will be on the remaining in May.

Chief Seavey updated the board on the Lavender Ribbon Report timeline with the expectation the report will be released at FRI 2018. The committee will be meeting in Albany to write the report. He has asked Mr. Scott Beecher and Mr. Robert Logan to go to the Yellow Ribbon Report meeting in April to learn about the process of creating a ribbon report.

Chief Seavey informed the board that the Cancer Alliance Steering Committee will be meeting in Baltimore in March, and that the chairman of the alliance is no longer Dennis Compton. The new

chairman is Victor Stagnaro from NFFF and Ed Klima has taken over as Vice Chairman of the Center for the Excellence and Health.

Chief Seavey provided an overview of the final cancer poster, and thanked Chairman Wall for the strong support he has given the committee. He recognized the hard work towards the cancer poster by Mr. Beecher.

Chairman Wall thanked Chief Seavey for his leadership on the issue and promised to assist and guide him if he need any help.

A discussion on the needed and appropriate amount of funding for the Lavender Ribbon Report. Chief Collins emphasized the importance of making sure it remains a 50:50 project with the NVFC by clearly communicating with them.

Motion by Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Flynn to approve up to \$20,000 for the Lavender Ribbon Report with the expectation that the report should be a final turn key document with funding for publishing being split 50:50 with the NVFC. Motion carried.

Chairman Wall asked for a clarification on the title of the poster. Chief Seavey stated the title is *10 Best Practices in Preventing Firefighter Cancer*.

Chief Seavey informed the group that Plymovent is interested in assisting with the Lavender Ribbon Report. The chiefs discussed it and felt that they needed to explore the potential opportunity more thoroughly with Ms. Distler before deciding. The discussion emphasized the need to ensure that the VCOS is not being exclusionary, while at the same time protecting the VCOS brand and aligning with the IAFC. The best way to ensure this is by working with Ms. Distler.

Health and Wellness Training– Chief Wall

Chairman Wall updated the board on the health and wellness training. He explained that the group has had several conference calls gathering information and developing a plan. He worked with the IAFC staff to get a quote for holding the conference at the IAFC headquarters. The group is planning to hold a one-time meeting where select individuals and create a takeaway focused document. Currently the meeting is being planned for September. The topics the document will cover were narrowed down to 3-4 topics. The group is now at the point where funds need to be committed.

Motion by Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Catrambone to move forward on the project without funding.

Chief Collins raised a concern that the motion should include a dollar amount to allow the project to move forward. Chief Black echoed Chief Collins' concern, and recommended approving funding up to \$15,000 with a contingency that the EMS and SHS sections are in.

Motion amended by Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Catrambone to move forward on the project with funding up to \$15,000 provided the VCOS board receives a report from Chairman Wall that the SHS and EMS sections have agreed to move forward with the Tactical Health and Wellness project. Motion carried.

Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Cowger to rescind the motion to discuss the process of endorsing the IAFC 2nd Vice President in executive session. Motion carried.

Chairman Wall asked the board what process they would like to use to figure out, which of the 6 candidates they should endorse. Chief Flynn recommended establishing a committee of 3 to interview the candidates and report back to the board. Chief Collins recommended only interviewing those that have requested an endorsement. Chief Cook agreed with Chief Collins and Chief Flynn and emphasized that this allows the board to get to know each candidate and shows a clear and transparent process.

Chief Flynn recommended for the committee to ask when the candidate became a VCOS member. Chief Catrambone recommended asking for a reference letter or statement from surrounding departments and state associations. Chief Rush felt that asking the candidate who has endorsed them will suffice, as it says a lot if the candidate does not already have local support.

Chairman Wall appointed Chief Catrambone, Chief Cook and Chief Windisch to be the Endorsement Vetting Committee for the 2018 2nd Vice President, with Chief Catrambone appointed as the chair of the committee.

Action Item: Ms. Bragiel Cozad to send the list of questions from the previous board position selection interviews and add the questions raised during the discussion.

Committee Appointments– Chief Wall

Chairman Wall reviewed the committee appointments attached in the board packet.

Action Item: All committees need to submit a report with a timeline and the name of any added members to the committee by the March conference call.

Chairman Wall strongly encouraged the chairs of each committee to add members to their committee to lighten the work load and to get more VCOS members involved.

Action Item: Chief Collins is to follow up with Ms. Sara Stehle and learn the needed tasks for the Symposium in the West scholarships for the board members.

Chief Windisch reminded the board that it is acceptable and sometimes necessary to withdraw yourself from the selection process to prevent bias and maintain the integrity of the award and the VCOS.

Booth Schedule 2018– Chief Rush

Chief Rush reviewed the VCOS 2018 Booth Schedule:

- FDIC: April 23-28 in Indianapolis, IN
- New York Chiefs: June 13-16 in Verona, NY
- New England Chiefs: June 21-22 in CT

Chief Rush explained that FireHouse Expo was removed from the schedule, because the booth did not see any traffic last year.

Chief Rush inquired if the IAFC will have a booth at FDIC this year. Ms. Ameen informed him the IAFC will have a booth.

Chief Rush stated that board members will be needed to work the booth at FDIC and one more board member is needed for the New York Chiefs meeting.

Action Item: Board members wishing to work the booth at FDIC or the New York Chiefs meeting should email Chief Rush with their request.

Chief Black recommended looking into having a booth at the South Atlantic Conference. Chief Rush inquired about potential meetings in Canada.

Action Item: Chief Stuebing to send Chief Rush information on booth and presentation opportunities at conferences in Canada, including provincial conferences.

Exhibiting Taskforce– Chief Collins and Chief Seavey

Chief Collins and Chief Seavey updated the board that they are working on getting the booth ordered, but do not currently have a timeline for the booth. Ms. Ameen reminded the taskforce to communicate with the conferences team, so they plan an appropriate amount of space in the FRI pavilion for the new booth.

Communications Committee– Chief Rush, Chief Cook and Chief Catrambone

Chief Rush updated the board that Ms. Fishkin completed her last newsletter for the VCOS and explained that the committee will now be starting to create their new electronic newsletters. He encouraged everyone present to send articles and videos for the new newsletter.

Action Item: Send Chief Rush a 1-2 minute video or an article for the newsletter.

Chairman Wall provided an update on his outreach to Paratech. Chief Rush emphasized the new capabilities of the newsletter and how the VCOS can take advantage of these new abilities.

Chief Rush reviewed the statistics on social media, and thanked Ms. Bragiel Cozad for her exceptional work with it. He emphasized that the VCOS's success on social media has been largely because of her. Chief Cook highlighted the statistics on shares and tweets and how by the end of the year they had quadrupled. He emphasized that the VCOS social media efforts are seeing a great return and connecting the VCOS materials and voice with members. Ms. Ameen highlighted that the statistics show the popularity of the SOPs/SOGs among the membership. She encouraged the board to consider updating them to ensure they remain good samples and models for the VCOS membership.

Chief Rush encouraged the members of the Canadian fire service present to get involved with the newsletter and the communications committee. Chief MacKenzie invited the VCOS to use his articles from his column Volunteer Vision in the VCOS newsletter.

Ms. Bragiel Cozad provided an update on the VCOS website. It is currently being transitioned onto the same platform as the main IAFC website. Currently the Digital Center is attempting to have the move complete by the end of February. A link will be sent to the board to review the website prior to launch, once it is moved over.

Information Only Items:

New Business:

- Pierce Agreement – Chief Windisch
 - Chief Windisch updated the board on the one-page Pierce agreement, which was primarily a simple update. Hope to have it to the board for review within the next two weeks.
- Fire Chief of the Year Award – Chairman Wall
 - Nomination period is open. Chairman Wall invited the board to bring forward anyone they would like to nominate. He reminded the board that whoever brings a nominee forward that board member will be responsible for the work.

- Get well cards for Mr. Skip Gibson, Chief John Buckman, and Chief Robert Bettenhausen
- FYI: Shane Crutcher new Chief of Ft. Belvoir (VA)
- VCOS 25th anniversary
 - Chairman Wall recommended he reach out to the past chairs of the VCOS to create a plan for the 25th anniversary
 - Chief Collins reminded the board that Shell would like to assist the VCOS with celebrating the 25th anniversary
- Committee to review the VCOS's current bylaws as of February 1, 2018
 - Chief Windisch volunteered to serve on the committee to add historical fact, since he has all the old documents and has been on all of the previous bylaw committees.
 - Chief Catrambone also expressed interest in being on the committee.

Action Item: Chairman Wall asked the VCOS board to email him if they are interested in serving on the VCOS bylaws committee

- The Eastern Division has requested Chief Collins to stay an extra day following CFSI to speak on how the VCOS utilizes dues money, and what VCOS members receive. This would be an all-day meeting.
 - Chairman Wall and Chief Collins agreed to do what they could to make it work.

Old Business:

- Be Inclusive Poster – Chief Cook and Chief Cowger
 - The committee is working on the next poster and have several conceptual ideas. The main idea is to have inclusive words in the shape of a helmet. This should be ready for Symposium in the West.
 - For the final poster the committee is planning to do a poster with takeaways and resources.

Action Item: Ms. Ameen to send current Be Inclusive posters to Chief Ken Stuebing.

- Leadership Award Presented at Symposium in the West update
 - Chairman Wall reminded the board that the VCOS wants to stay away from calling it the Fire Chief of the Year award, and does not want to compete with the John M. Buckman III Leadership award
 - Chief Collins advised the board to think about the board's goals and objectives for the award, and that it may be too soon for the award. He reminded the VCOS board that Symposium in the West is still very new.
 - Chief Seavey recommended coming up with an award that embodies the reason Symposium in the West was created, perhaps have it recognize creativity and innovation.
 - Mr. Siegrist warned that the conference is still new, and cautioned the board to think about what they would do with the award, if the board decided to discontinue Symposium in the West.
 - Chief Black recommended moving a current award from Symposium in the Sun to Symposium in the West.
- VCOS Educational Courses – Chief Collins
 - A survey was sent to the Educational Course managers that asked a variety of questions. The results were recently received, but still need to be compiled.

Action Item: Chief Collins to submit a report with recommendations from the survey by the March meeting.

- Chairman Wall thanked Chief Cook for volunteering to assist *Leading the Transition* bridge gaps between career and volunteer members.

- Chief Collins recommended Chief Cook also speak with Chief Struble and collaborate with the Labor Employee Collaboration committee, as *Leading the Transition* may go away or be absorbed.

Action Item: Chief Cook to speak with Leading the Transition and the Labor Employee Collaboration committee and see what their recommendations are for him to assist with bridging the gap between career and volunteer members and raising interest about the programs.

Roundtable and Announcements:

Chairman Wall began the roundtable by asking everyone to share their personal goals and roles with the VCOS and the IAFC for the future.

Many individuals present thanked the VCOS board for their continued efforts and Chief Stuebing and Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency for their exemplary hospitality and for hosting the February VCOS board meeting.

Mr. Mauser: Thank you. This has been extremely insightful, despite some of the challenges. I feel very good for the future. The discussion that took place here is very encouraging.

Ms. Bragiel Cozad: Thank you so much for the opportunity to attend the VCOS board meeting and for the opportunity to work with the VCOS board. I am looking forward to continuing to grow and work with the VCOS and the IAFC.

Chief Seavey: It is refreshing to see that we have common challenges. The hospitality was beyond belief. I can't thank you and our partners enough. I have talked to my wife, and she has requested that I run again. I will be throwing my hat into the ring and will do my best to serve the VCOS.

Chief Flynn: I am building 3 new apparatus, and all will be clean trucks. I used what we have learned from the cancer initiative to create them.

Chief Cowger: We have been doing little things in our department, and our members are expressing that it is about time. This is very encouraging to see. I would like to echo the thanks from those before me.

Chief Black: Thank you Chief Stuebing for your hospitality. Thank you everyone for entrusting me to continue with the IAFC board.

Chief Stuebing: Thank you for coming here and to our visitors for attending the meeting today. Thank you for Chief MacKenzie for representing the CAFC/Canadian Division. Thank you to the team for all their hard work. Looking forward to growing the relationship between Canada and the VCOS. Things don't stop at the border, and we shouldn't either. I look forward to the future.

Chief MacKenzie: Thank you for having me. It has been 7 years, since I was a VCOS member. After this inspiring meeting I am looking forward to getting involved with the VCOS again. Thank you for the invite.

Ms. VanGorder: Thank you very much. This has been very educational. The scope you cover is amazing and impressive. It is a wonder to see.

Chief Rush: Would like to reiterate those before me on thanking our hosts for their amazing hospitality, it has been an incredible weekend. I happen to be out of New York. If anyone is coming to New York, please let me know. I just wanted to share a story on how we are making a

difference. The other day I had a firefighter that was thinking I shouldn't even be going into the Chief's office with my bunker gear on. It is working it is getting out there. I do intend to run again. It has been a fabulous experience. Looking forward to hopefully getting re-elected. I did buy a house in Maryland but am still a few years out from retiring. Plan on getting involved in Maryland, when I do move.

Mr. Siegrist: Thank you for the opportunity to participate. Thank you for the hospitality. Would like to share a cautionary tale. I am a believer that if given the opportunity to do the right thing in most cases people or organizations will when there is a common cause. I think VCOS just needs to be that common cause. If you have folks like VFIS and Provident working together even though we compete daily, you can get anybody to work together. This is about having a collaborative partnership, even if it is with competitors. You may have to lay the rules down from time to time, but it is necessary. I have sat on a board for a long time, and for many years an apparatus manufacturer was our major sponsor. We tried to get others involved as well. It was surprisingly difficult to get some of the others involved, because there was a perception that we were so involved with this apparatus manufacturer that it wasn't worthwhile. Now that apparatus manufacturer is out of business and we are still suffering. We would be in a much better position had we diversified more. It may be a challenge, but it is important.

Chief Catrambone: Thank you. This is always a little recharge for me. I will be out of touch for a week in March and April. I will be putting in for vice president of my state association by the end of the month.

Mr. Balliet: It has been a great time. Thank you all. I think you are all going about it the right way. Your dance cards are all very full. Just be careful to ensure you don't get overwhelmed and lose your way.

Chief Windisch: Thank you very much. I was concerned about coming here, and I am glad I came. This has been outstanding and extremely valuable. Ft. Lauderdale has come up with design criteria for engines that addresses cancer initiatives. These are small things to isolate equipment from firefighters, including PPE compartments. Ft. Lauderdale went back to their existing specifications and took out the things they didn't need. In the end, it was cost neutral to make the changes. Ft. Lauderdale is on tract. The manufacturer is even making warm water available. There are huge movements to reduce cancer exposure. At my department, we are doing great: gross decon, using the saunas, and now we have the wipes on all the apparatus. This came from my members going to Symposium in the Sun and learning about it. They have made the changes themselves. Ground swells from the bottom up.

Chairman Wall: Chief Stuebing, I would like to present you with this challenge coin on behalf of the VCOS board of directors. Thank you for everything you and your team have done for us this weekend and the amazing hospitality you have shown.

Chairman Wall: Personally, some people have asked me to run for chair, again. I am going to stick to leaving and being immediate past chair. I appreciate the people encouraging me, but I am sticking to it. I will be inducted to the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Hall of Fame thanks in part to Chief Flynn's efforts. All of you have helped me and guided me, I appreciate everything you have done in helping me. This is the best section. Thank you very much and thank you for hosting us.

Chief Collins: Thank you to your hospitality and team. Thank you to our sponsors and partners. Thank you to you, Chief Wall. Thank you again and look forward to new relationships.

Ms. Ameen: Thank you to Halifax, you really made Ms. Bragiel Cozad and my job easy. Thank you for everything this board does. You have helped me grow so much and are a big reason for where I am. I will still be around, but Ms. Bragiel Cozad will be the main POC moving forward. We are spreading the work around to get everyone involved with the VCOS. Thank you. You are all friends and very important to me. Thank you so much for all your guidance throughout the years.

Chief Cook: Thank you so much. I was hesitant about coming to Halifax, but there are no regrets. This has been amazing. Just being involved with this committee for 6 months has been incredible. What I find most impressive is that this group allows disagreement. Everyone is truly entitled to an opinion. This is very impressive. This is not how most committees interact.

Motion by Chief Flynn to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:58 PM. The next call is 3/14 at 4pm ET.

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