



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



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## VCOS Board of Directors Meeting

**May 5, 2017  
Reno, Nevada**

### MINUTES

#### **Friday, May 5**

Present: Chief Timothy Wall, Chief Donna Black, Chief Jason Catrambone, Chief Norvin Collins, Chief Charles Flynn, Chief Randy Larson, Chief Fred Windisch, Chief Ed Rush, Chief James Seavey

Absent: Chief Dan Eggleston

Guests: Mr. Barry Balliet, Mr. Skip Gibson, Mr. Joe Giorgi, Mr. Ed Mann, Mr. Jeff Siegrist, Chief John Buckman

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen, Ms. Jennifer Bragiel, Mr. Shawn Stokes, Ms. Monica Willemsen, Mr. Mark Light

The meeting started at 8:52 am.

#### **Introduction and Welcome of Guests – Chief Timothy Wall**

Chief Wall started the meeting and said a few welcoming remarks. He introduced himself, and asked those present to introduce themselves. Following introductions, Chief Wall welcomed and introduced Mr. Mark Light to present an update on the IAFC.

#### **IAFC Leadership Update - Mr. Mark Light**

Mr. Light thanked the Board of Directors for the invitation to be at Symposium in the West and for the opportunity to present before them. He emphasized how successful the conference has been, and the value staff place on coming to and working this event.

Mr. Light began his presentation by discussing the IAFC Elections, which are currently open. Chief Dan Eggleston is running for the Second Vice President position against Chief Larry Few from Georgia. As of Mr. Light's presentation only approximately 8.5% of membership had voted. Mr. Light encouraged everyone to vote, and discussed a contested but often misunderstood aspect of the election. This aspect is concerning the permanent seats to be added to the IAFC's Board of Directors. In the current IAFC bylaws there is a nuance that allows any division that meets the 10% threshold to immediately petition the Board to receive a permanent seat.

Chief Wall asked if the Board had the right to say no to a petition. Mr. Light responded by explaining that technically the Board can say no, but the IAFC attorney has stated that the Board would need a strong reason for saying no, since the section met the requirements. Mr. Light went on to explain that every additional Board Member increases the costs of the Board 10 – 15%. The VCOS Board had a discussion with Mr. Light on the history of the size of the IAFC Board and potential results of allowing any section that meets the threshold to have a permanent IAFC Board of Directors seat.

Mr. Light then updated the VCOS Board on Saudi Aramco. The program is preparing to place the next group in Montgomery County, Maryland. The program has had many departments step forward and volunteer to work with the program. Saudi Aramco is looking at having a conference in Bahrain next year, and the IAFC is in conversation with several countries about creating a similar program with them.

Mr. Light then discussed the development of a conflict resolution process, in case a division ends up in conflict with IAFC. This came about following a dispute with Firehouse. Chief Wall asked for more clarification on the topic and what would be considered a conflict. Mr. Light explained that exhibiting at a conference or working on a project generally would not be considered a conflict, however a partnership and the sharing of the IAFC logo would be considered a conflict. Ultimately, it is a delicate balance and each case must be looked at independently. The goal of this is to prevent competition with ourselves.

Mr. Light also updated the Board on a new membership pilot program for departments serving under 10,000 people. The initial states to pilot the program have been selected and will be Michigan and Missouri. Mr. Light apologized for a lack of communication between Membership and VCOS on this initiative and expressed that Membership's communication will be better in the future.

Mr. Light then updated the Board about Connexions and its continued popularity. The sponsorship for the last event completely sold out. It also now has competition with a for-profit company that is doing the same thing.

Mr. Light went on to update the Board about the sale of the IAFC building, about a new intellectual property agreement that must be signed prior to the start of a project, and about two new programs the Women's Fire Chiefs Council and iDELP. The two programs are having a positive and strong start with the Women's Fire Chiefs Council having its first meeting in Las Vegas in conjunction with FRM and iDELP receiving 43 applications for 10 – 15 spots. iDELP is aimed at preparing underrepresented groups for national leadership positions.

Mr. Light concluded with a challenge to the VCOS Board of Directors to create a guide or manual for a new or interim volunteer or combination chief. This manual would provide an interim or new chief with the information they need to initially do their job. This should be short and simple, at the end the manual could provide additional resources that can assist them further. Chief Wall thanked Mr. Light for the update and opened the floor to questions.

Chief Seavey asked Mr. Light about a lack of IAFC staff from Membership at FDIC. At FDIC the IAFC booth received a large amount of traffic and managed to sign up a large amount of people for membership. Chief Seavey expressed that having someone from membership would have greatly assisted them with the more technical aspects of membership and becoming a member. Mr. Light agreed that with the numbers, having an IAFC Membership staff member there would have been wise. He explained that this level of interest at FDIC is out of the norm and that they are preparing a full report on what happened at FDIC to enhance and improve the process in the future.

#### **Volunteer Workforce Solutions Update - Ms. Monica Willemsen and Mr. Shawn Stokes**

Chief Wall introduced Ms. Monica Willemsen for an update on the National Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) program and how VCOS can continue to work with the program moving forward.

Ms. Willemsen thanked the Board for their continued support and allowing the National pilots to attend Symposium in the West. She emphasized how much the pilots take away from Symposium in the Sun and Symposium in the West.

Ms. Willemsen informed the Board that the program is at the half way point with the grant ending in 2018. During the first half of the program, National VWS program staff conducted site visits to gain an in-depth understanding of each department. The National VWS team conducted a workshop for the pilots the day before Symposium in the West started to report and discuss the similar findings from

the site visits. Throughout Symposium in the West, Ms. Willemsen and Ms. Lexie Coulson have been holding one-on-one meetings with the pilots to provide feedback, guidance, and tips and tricks.

Ms. Willemsen explained that the National VWS program has created a new marketing campaign that is currently being finalized, and has partnered with iHeart Media. iHeart Media will be pushing advertisements in the pilots' areas utilizing their and their partners' websites and radio stations.

Ms. Willemsen provided an update concerning the Chief's Handbook that the National VWS program is developing. This handbook is designed for a new chief, and it will be available in a digital online format. The plan is to design it in a way that a chief can choose exactly what he/she needs and receive the information in either a short article or a short video. The beta version of the handbook is planned to release in the fall/winter. The National VWS team would like to present the beta at Symposium in the Sun 2017 gather feedback, and release the final version at Symposium in the West 2018.

Ms. Willemsen concluded her update by inviting the VCOS Board of Directors to participate in the pilots' monthly topical calls.

Mr. Shawn Stokes then updated the Board on VWS. At the time of this meeting, VWS consists of the National, Virginia, Connecticut and Tennessee programs. The Virginia program is coming to a conclusion, the Connecticut program is in its third phase with two years remaining, and the Tennessee program just started its first phase. All of these programs have been very successful. During the grant period, VWS applied for a new state, North Carolina, and is hopeful that it will be awarded. During the next round, the VWS team will be submitting for a continuation of the National grant.

Chief Wall thanked Ms. Willemsen and Mr. Stokes for their updates, and opened the floor for questions.

Chief Wall asked Mr. Stokes how VWS determines what states they would like to work with. Mr. Stokes responded that it primarily comes through recommendations by members and staff. VWS does try to work with states that are not already doing something similar to the program. Mr. Stokes also explained that in an effort not to have their applications competing they also try to limit the applications that they submit to one or two.

#### **Chair's Report – Chief Wall**

The board reviewed the February minutes.

**Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Flynn to approve the minutes from the February board meeting. Motion carried.**

Chief Wall went over the creation of groups to focus on projects outlined by the Creating the Future document. The first group will focus on board meetings and will be comprised of Chief Black, Mr. Giorgi, Mr. Balliet and Chief Flynn. The second group will focus on surveying the membership and will consist of Chief Collins, Chief Larson, Mr. Beecher and Mr. Siegrist. The third group will focus on increasing numbers and improving involvement of the membership. This group will consist of Chief Seavey, Chief Windisch, Mr. Mann and Mr. Siedberg. The fourth group will focus on funding and will be comprised of Chief Rush, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Markel and Chief Catrambone. Chief Buckman then reviewed expectations for the groups, each group is responsible for deciding which of the projects they will work on and establishing their own deadlines. The groups do need to inform Chief Buckman if they will be adding or removing any projects. It was emphasized that each group can seek outside help, but they are responsible for ensuring that the projects are completed. The Chair will act as an oversight for the groups.

Chief Buckman raised the importance of having strong survey questions, and suggested the usage of an individual to review the questions prior to finalizing the survey, but only after the survey group has written the questions.

**Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Seavey to approve up to \$500 to be spent toward having a professional survey reviewer assist with finalizing the survey. Motion carried.**

Following the motion, Provident generously volunteered to fund up to an additional \$250 if the professional survey reviewer could not be hired for the \$500.

Ms. Kelly Ameen also informed the Board that IAFC staff can put the survey into Survey Monkey once it has been developed and designed. This survey then can be sent to membership to be filled out.

Chief Buckman concluded the conversation on the groups by informing them that he will create an overall statement on expectations that specifies if there are any deadlines.

Chief Wall presented on the VCOS election policy and procedures for 2018. Chief Wall pointed out that currently VCOS does not have detailed election policies or procedures, and that they have been doing it by basing it off what had been done in the past. Chief Wall emphasized the importance of having clear guidelines or policies for elections, and asked everyone to think about what they would like to see in the policy. Chief Collins will be creating a draft on expectations for VCOS Election Policies for 2018.

Chief Wall updated the board about a CPSE meeting at CFSI stating that it was very successful and more will be developed later from it. There was also an informative briefing at CFSI between Hill staffers, VCOS, and NVFC. He then introduced Chief Catrambone to update the Board on the successful call held between Capitol Hill staffers and VCOS members from 3 states on the fire service and its needs and goals concerning government. Chief Catrambone explained that this was an initial conversation with the staffers that informed them of what they can start working on. Much of the discussion was on VRIPA. Chief Catrambone believes there will be future calls.

#### **Vice Chair's Report – Chief Flynn**

Chief Flynn began his report with an update on the Yellow Ribbon Report, which has been approved by the Safety, Health and Survival committee. The report is currently being held up with graphic design, but it is still on target to be finished by FRI 2017. The panelists that reviewed it were all very excited by it and had only positive comments. Chief Flynn explained that the Yellow Ribbon Report committee would like to do 2,000 print copies of the report along with thumb drives. The committee also recommends having yellow shirts made for the Board to wear at the FRI release.

**Motion by Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Catrambone to approve the use of Pierce funds to pay Mike McDonald \$2,000 in addition to the \$10,000 already approved. Motion carried.**

Chief Windisch informed the Board that they are in preliminary discussions to get sponsors for the flash drives. The flash drives are expected to be created post launch of the report.

Chief Collins discussed the plan for the yellow shirts, which are planned to be dress shirts. He asked for some flexibility, while he manages the creation of the shirts. Chief Wall recommended wearing yellow on Thursday or Friday, instead of pink. Chief Flynn recommended wearing red at Symposium in the Sun on Friday in honor of Veterans Day.

Chief Flynn has been trying to get in touch with Neal from Kidde to do another year of the Step Up and Stand Out campaign. This year will be a little different from last year. They will be recognizing a department, instead of an individual. They are also working on the voting and how they will be doing it, at the time of this report, the plan is to narrow the pool down to 3 – 5 departments and have one round of voting. Kidde is looking for a new tag line for the campaign, Chief Flynn requested all ideas to be sent to him. The winner will be invited to Symposium in the Sun; Chief Flynn is still working out the details of the partnership.

Chief Windisch recommended that if Kidde will be giving out detectors this year, they have more packages with less smoke detectors each.

#### **International Director's Report – Chief Seavey**

Chief Eggleston was absent, but included an update in the board packet. Chief Seavey was invited to update the group concerning the Cancer Alliance. Chief Seavey recommended Chief Catrambone to replace Chief Eggleston as the VCOS representative to the Cancer Alliance.

**Motion by Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Collins to accept the recommendation to have Chief Catrambone represent VCOS on the Cancer Alliance. Motion carried with 1 Abstention.**

#### **Secretary-Treasurer's Report – Chief Collins**

Chief Collins included a financial report from the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2017 in the board packet.

He reviewed the 2017 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Financials. Pointing out that two lines were added to the report, one for Symposium in the West and one for Symposium in the Sun to assist with tracking their revenues. In the past, when money was generated or expended, it was put in the budget, but it wasn't attached to anything. This made it difficult to track, now a new cost center will be created for each symposium each year. This will allow the board to differentiate cost and revenue for each conference independently.

Chief Collins reported that the Pierce and General funds do have a target to keep a certain amount in each fund, and they each are well above the target. Chief Collins saw no red flags for the budget at the time of his report, but did point out that VCOS needs to improve its dues revenue. Chief Collins stated that the budget is very reliant on the revenue from the conferences, and he would like the revenue to be more diversified.

#### **Symposium in the West 2017 Report – Chief Collins**

Chief Collins reported that the final numbers for Symposium in the West 2017 have not been reported, but overall the numbers were up over last year. Chief Collins has received a lot of feedback that attendees like the intimacy of the conference. Chief Collins recommended capping the attendee numbers for Symposium in the West at 250 – 300. Chief Collins updated the board that marketing for Symposium in the West 2018 at the Scottsdale Embassy Suites has already started.

Chief Seavey recommended improving the food and beverages available during the breaks and breakfast.

Chief Wall recommended including flyers on the next symposium, scholarships and awards in the bags in the future. Chief Windisch raised a concern that attendees are not looking at the materials in their bags, and recommended doing posters instead. A discussion followed on how to entice attendees to look at the items placed in their bags.

Chief Black pointed out that there were 2 agendas provided, but only one had the specifics about the presentations. She recommended having the key points on both. Chief Collins explained that they are playing with the layout of the agenda and are still trying to figure out the best format.

Chief Collins welcomed the feedback and asked the board to email him comments and encourage attendees to fill out the survey. He also informed the board that the Symposium in the West committee will be looking to add a couple of members.

#### **Fire-Rescue International 2017 – Chief Wall**

Chief Wall reviewed the FRI outline and schedule, emphasizing that Class A uniforms will be worn for the Annual meeting, and reminded that the suggested cost for the President's gift was \$200.

Chief Wall asked Chief Black to report on her committee that had been tasked to do a meet and greet at FRI 2017. She informed the board that they have 2 sponsors interested and are currently working on menus. Chief Black remarked that the committee is still working on many details regarding the event including: how to communicate it, how to market it, how to track its engagement, and how to charge it to the sponsors.

**Motion by Chief Larson and seconded by Chief Flynn to accept the reports as presented.  
Motion carried.**

#### **Membership Report – Chief Wall**

Chief Wall provided an update about the new taskforce for recruiting rural fire departments. He has spoken to Terry Monroe about the taskforce. Mr. Monroe has expressed his desire to have VCOS assistance with conference calls with the two pilot states of the program.

#### **Symposium in the Sun 2017 – Chief Windisch**

Symposium in the Sun registration numbers are currently out performing last year's numbers. One hotel for the event has already sold out. The theme for Symposium in the West 2017 is Leadership. The brochures for the event are planned to be completed mid to late-June.

He also asked any board members wishing to do VCOS Talks to email him.

This year's sell out numbers for Symposium in the Sun are 528 for registrants and 38 for vendors. Chief Windisch expects the event to sell out again, and explained that marketing and financials are in line.

Chief Windisch also updated the board on the Symposium in the Sun committee members. Chief Cowger and Chief Heather Burford were added to the committee. Chief Wilson came off the committee, and it is Chief Holman's last year on the committee.

#### **Awards and Scholarships**

Chief Flynn began the discussion by updating the board on the status of possible VCOS members being on the VCOS Award and Scholarship committees. At the time of this reporting, he had not spoken to Chief Bob Love about participating. He also invited suggestions from the board, emphasizing that they are trying to get more involvement of non-board members in the committees. Chief Rush suggested reaching out to past award recipients. Chief Wall recommended opening, who can serve on the committee, to the VCOS membership, instead of only past recipients and emerging leaders. Chief Collins is currently reviewing the criteria for committee members.

Chief Seavey recommended opening the awards up to everyone, and giving a free 1 year membership as part of the award. Chief Flynn pointed out that for the Training Officer Award it is too late to open up this year, but could be a positive change for next year's award.

The representatives from Provident and VFIS offered to assist with spreading the word about the awards and scholarships that VCOS has available. Chief Black recommended changing the look of the Chairman's report one month and using the subject line "Scholarship Opportunities Available" to draw more attention.

#### **Information Only Items:**

#### **Additional Submitted Reports**

- Helix – Chief Flynn (pgs. 19-20)
- NVFC SAFER – Chief Flynn (pg. 21)
- Women Fire Chiefs Council – Chief Black (pg. 22)
- Get Checked Campaign – Chief Black (pg. 23)
- You and ISO – Chief Curl (pgs. 24-25)

- IAFC Terrorism & Homeland Security Committee – Chief Richards (pg. 26)
- Leadership Employee Collaboration – Chief Struble (pgs. 27-28)
- EMS Modernization Project – Chief Hughes (pg. 29)
- NFPA 1720 – Chief Render (pg. 30)
- Beyond Hoses and Helmets – Chief Render (pg. 31)
- VISION – Chief Parr (pgs. 32-33)
- Bullying/Harassment in the Fire Service – Chief Larson (pg. 34)
- IAFC Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Task Force – Chief Mohler (pg.35)
- Commission on Professional Credentialing - Chief Christopoulos (pgs. 36-37)
- National Association of Counties (NACO) – Chief Singer (pgs. 38-39)
- Leading the Transition in Vol/Combo Depts – Chief Cheves (pgs. 40-41)
- National Firefighter Near Miss Program/Insight 360 Event Reporting Tool – John Russ (pgs. 42-43)

There was some discussion on the submitted reports. Namely on Mr. John Russ’s request to do a demonstration of their new system to ensure that it meets the needs of volunteer and combination departments. Chief Flynn and Chief Rush both expressed that they felt the tool is not beneficial to small departments. The board decided to have Chief Wall reach out to Mr. John Russ and find out the value of the demonstration, the timeframe for the demonstration, and if it is necessary to do a demonstration of the entire product.

**Old Business:**

**Fire Chief of the Year – Chief Wall**

Chief Flynn discussed that he intends to submit a name. Chief Seavey shared that he plans to nominate Chief Byron Andrews. Chief Windisch shared that he will be nominating as a former winner, Chief Chris Hecht from Wisconsin.

**Motion by Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Flynn for the VCOS board to submit Chief Chris Hecht as their nomination for his efforts in his region with Chief Wall being recused from reviewing the Chief Heck’s resume. Motion carried with 1 Abstention.**

**Federal Regulators Toolkit – Chief Windisch**

Chief Windisch briefed the group on the Federal Regulators Handbook and its progress. They had 1 call so far and are still in the very beginning stages.

**Cancer Initiative Committee – Chief Seavey and Wall**

Chief Seavey updated the board on the creation of the committee. The committee is beginning to create deadlines for the planned activities. The committee is working with the NVFC’s strategic plan, and is working on reviewing all of the Cancer Support Networks. Chief Seavey is working with Brian McQueen to plan a meeting in Baltimore.

Chief Seavey also elaborated that the committee plans to request the NFPA Firefighter Cancer Cohort to periodically update the section on its activities. He elaborated also on building a relationship with Safety, Health and Survival. Chief Seavey emphasized the importance of having a consistent message and ensuring the accuracy of all facts put forward.

The committee is also working on doing an annual webinar. It was recommended this webinar take place in February for Cancer Prevention Month.

The committee plans to have a more in depth report by the November board meeting.

**Motion by Chief Seavey and seconded by Chief Larson for \$5,000 to be dedicated to the Cancer Initiative Committee for 2017. Motion carried.**

**VCOS 2017 Booth Schedule and Exhibiting Task Force - Chiefs Seavey and Collins**

- June 14-17 – NY Chiefs
- October 17-21 – Firehouse Expo
- November 9-12 – Symposium in the Sun

Chief Rush updated the board on the scheduling for the booth. He stated that a schedule will be sent out for FRI and asked everyone to be there a couple hours each. He then went over who will be attending each event, and asked that anyone also attending volunteer to help with the booth. It was stated that this would be voluntary and VCOS may not necessarily reimburse for participation.

**New Business:**

**Updates from our Friends and Supporters**

- ISO: Is currently re-evaluating their ISO areas. They expect only minor changes. They are very impressed by Symposium in the West thus far.
- Provident: Emphasized the value of VCOS's work and of ensuring that all voices are all marching in the same direction.
- VFIS: Wanted to ensure that VCOS is using their funding to the fullest advantage. Also discussed that they have spent a lot of time using outside experts to look into the topic of drones, and offered to share the information with VCOS.

**VCOS 2017 Nomination for the Hall of Legends, Legacies and Leaders – Chief Seavey**

The National Fire Heritage Center (NFHC) is starting a hall of legends. Anybody can nominate someone to be in the Hall of Legends, Legacies and Leaders. This year will be the inauguration of the honor. Chief Rush recommended that VCOS nominate the founders of VCOS for the honor.

**Motion by Chief Flynn and seconded by Chief Catrambone for Chief Windisch to prepare for Chairman Wall the nomination of Chief Buckman and Chief Bettenhausen for the Hall of Legends, Legacies and Leaders. Motion carried.**

**NFPA 350: Confined Space Work Practices**

It was decided that Chief Wall is to reach out and explain that this report should go to Safety, Health and Survival and that they will be the ones to distribute the information not VCOS.

**Diversity Poster – Chief Wall**

All involved with a poster on diversity have agreed to the concept. The goal is to have a large poster created by Symposium in the Sun, and to have a downloadable poster on the website, along with handing them out. The poster is only meant to be the starting point. Chief Black explained that the goal is to expand on the poster.

Currently, there is not a budget for the project. A budget will need to be created, once the proof is finished the group will be able to get a cost. If the poster will be at the booth it may be able to come out of some of the booth money.

**Motion by Chief Collins and seconded by Chief Catrambone to move forward with the poster concept, to receive appropriate IAFC approval from all necessary parties and to let the Executive Board work with the IAFC to figure out funding for the project. Motion carried.**

**Communications Committee – Chiefs Rush, Black, Larson**

Chief Rush reviewed the recommendations that were created during a recent conference call on how to improve communications. The first recommendation was to utilize the IAFC staff to handle more communications. The second suggestion was to have sub-groups to do some of the communications work. The third idea was to add additional non-board members to the communications committee to help lighten the amount of work each committee member has. Chief Rush asked for the board's recommendation on the direction they would like the committee to explore more thoroughly.



Chief Collins emphasized that the cost of staff time has increased, and that VCOS has already used more than budgeted. He asked for a recommendation for improvements from Tim Hopkins and Jim Phillips, and to re-evaluate next steps following their recommendations for improvement.

Ms. Ameen recommended the board work with Jim Phillips to create a communications plan to follow.

Chief Rush then discussed the group's recommended changes for the newsletter to modernize it and to make it more relevant to its audience. The recommended changes include a training feature and a chief's concerns/issues section in the newsletter, as well as reaching out through social media to get articles.

Chief Rush then asked if the board had any recommendations for committee members. Chief Black recommended Chief Catrambone and Chief Mike Macdonald join the committee.

### **Roundtable**

Many chiefs and guests expressed their gratitude for being here, and congratulations on a successful Symposium in the West.

Chief Larson: We put in a grant through Walmart to get Rubbermaid locking tubs for all of our members, so they don't have to keep their gear in their family vehicles. This is an idea to help the cancer issue.

**Motion by Chief Catrambone and seconded by Chief Black to go into of Executive Session. Motion carried.**

**Motion by Chief Windisch and seconded by Chief Catrambone to come out of Executive Session. Motion carried.**

**Motion by Chief Catrambone and seconded by Chief Collins to adjourn. Motion carried.**

The meeting ended at 5:19pm.