



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

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Officers Section

VCOS Board Telecon March 13, 2014

Minutes

Called to order: 4:03 p.m.

Present: Chief Timothy Wall, Chief Dan Eggleston, Chief Ted Lowden, Chief Jim Wilson, Chief Shane Crutcher, Chief Randy Larson, Chief Fred Windisch

Absent: Chief Jim Seavey, Chief Dave Fulmer, Chief Mike Vaughn

Guests: Chief Nathan Trauernicht, Chief John Sinclair

Staff: Ms. Kelly Ameen

Agenda Overview and Format for IAFC 2nd Vice President Candidates - Chief Wall

Chief Wall explained that the two IAFC second vice president candidates would be on the call. They will have a chance to explain their platforms and then the VCOS board will have an opportunity to ask them questions.

IAFC 2nd Vice President Candidate: Chief Nathan Trauernicht

Chief Trauernicht is from UC Davis (Calif.) Fire Department. He appreciates the opportunity to talk to the VCOS board. He started his fire service career in Lincoln, Nebraska in the fire explorer program. Chief Trauernicht earned his undergraduate degree in Fire Protection and Safety Engineering from Oklahoma State University. The early part of his fire service career was in volunteer departments and then he went to combination departments. In 2008 he became the Fire Chief of UC Davis, a combination department. Last January he also became Fire Chief of the City of Davis as well which is all career.

He has been involved with the IAFC through the HR committee, Near Miss Sustainability Taskforce, and lobbying for the D block in Washington D.C. He is the Vice Chair of California FirstNet. He currently serves as President of the California Fire Chiefs Association (CFCA) and as Past President of the CFCA - Operations Chiefs Section.

He wants to contribute at the next level. What differentiates him from others? He has a long length of contribution to the fire service and experience leading change. He believes we need to look at new models and ways to deploy due to budget cuts. Recruitment and retention, and the ACA are issues very important to him since he has been involved with volunteer and combination departments throughout his career. His platform is about coming together to make a fire service that is smart, sustainable and safe. We need to capitalize on new technology. We need to do a better job telling our story and data can help with that. We need to collect and interpret data to explain the fire service's role in the

community. The fire service needs to look for new revenue streams. Partnerships with hospitals are important. We need to keep firefighters safe. He is a big proponent of firefighter health and wellness. Cardiac arrest, use of seat belts and traffic accidents need more attention. If elected, he will be a champion for VCOS and issues important to volunteer and combinations departments which make up the majority of the fire service.

VCOS Board Questions:

Chief Wall: Do you have full commitment and support at all levels personally and professionally? Chief Trauernicht replied that he does. He has a great window of opportunity right now. He has a very competent staff and full support across the board.

Chief Wall: What do you believe is IAFC's biggest challenge? How will you address it? Chief Trauernicht stated that the biggest challenge right now is the financial stability of the organization. All associations are struggling so the IAFC is not alone in that. We need to focus on the financial sustainability of the IAFC in the long run. He'd like to increase communication between the IAFC board, staff, divisions, and sections. There has never been a more important time to speak as one voice for the fire service. There is a need for more open dialogue and a stable plan. The IAFC needs to look at other revenue opportunities. Conferences have taken a hit recently. The IAFC needs to explore other models for fire service education delivery.

Chief Larson: The IAFC seems to want more control over sections. How do you feel about that? Chief Trauernicht mentioned that the IAFC's set-up is similar to that of the California Fire Chiefs Association. He is aware there is currently some tension there. Some of it is personalities and some of it is due to how the IAFC was originally structured. Restructuring would be a monumental task. We need to look at where we are today, and if nothing else, we should improve communication. He would like to see the IAFC board, staff and other stakeholders talk about how to move forward using a more effective model.

Chief Windisch: There is frustration with the number of staff hours allotted to sections. 240 hours is an arbitrary number. The work VCOS does directly benefits IAFC and the fire service as a whole. Chief Windisch explained his idea of buying other sections' unused hours at a lower rate. Chief Trauernicht replied that he is a business minded person. He will listen to VCOS' business arguments. He believes in sound business practices based on research and reasoning. Chief Trauernicht said we need to define the values of the association and support those values with appropriate funding. He would be willing to try to find a way to offset some section costs.

Chief Trauernicht would like the VCOS endorsement and would work hard for the section.

Chief Wall thanked Chief Trauernicht for coming on the call.

IAFC 2nd Vice President Candidate: Chief John Sinclair

Chief Sinclair from Kittitas Valley (Wash.) Fire & Rescue joined the call. He thanked the VCOS board for allowing him the chance to speak to them. He is currently Chief of a combination department with 30 career staff and 100 volunteers. He has been in the fire service for 37 years. He has been a member of VCOS for a long time. He's been involved with the EMS Section for 20 years and has been the Chair and International Director. He believes the IAFC board does well balancing different interests. He is aware that financial issues of the parent IAFC organization have affected sections. Members join sections because it is an interest of theirs and something they are passionate about. He believes that

the role of sections need to be strengthened within the IAFC. He understands the interworkings of the IAFC board and IAFC operations. He believes the IAFC needs to continue to affect change in D.C.; he has done a lot of work in that area. The ACA will affect the fire service drastically and also fundamentally change how healthcare is delivered in this country and how EMS systems operate. He has been studying this. Over the next 4 years, there will be significant impact and he wants to help the fire service with this change and to understand the whole scope and breadth of this issue. He has the expertise to do this. He is not running for IAFC Second Vice President to pump up his resume. He loves the fire service and the work of the IAFC. He has lots of energy as well as the knowledge and desire to help the IAFC membership.

VCOS Board Questions:

Chief Windisch: As VCOS Treasurer, he gets frustrated with all of the staff costs. It looks like VCOS was charged over \$22,000 for staff time for the Symposium. The annual number of staff liaison hours is 240 hours, which is an arbitrary number. Chief Windisch commented that he appreciates Chief Sinclair's work on the IAFC board in the past. Chief Sinclair stated that the EMS Section conference also has a lot of staff time charged to it. In fact, the EMS Section might not be able to afford to do the conference in the future. If the sections didn't exist then the IAFC would still have to do the work. IAFC as the parent organization has to exist, and we need to find the right balance.

Chief Crutcher: What is your plan to increase younger membership in the IAFC? Chief Sinclair mentioned that the Company Officer Symposium is a great way. He believes the IAFC needs to have a bigger presence in social networks and show the value of the IAFC. We need to show the younger generation how we can enhance their careers, help with firefighter safety, etc. There are about 300 cancer related deaths annually. That means 400 firefighters are dying a year. We need to focus on safety issues; that is very important to the younger membership. We need to show that we are looking out for them. They think the IAFF is looking out for them, and we need to show that the IAFC is as well.

Chief Wall: Do you have full commitment and support at all levels personally and professionally? Chief Sinclair replied that he does.

Chief Wall: What are the top 2 initiatives that the IAFC needs to focus on? Chief Sinclair responded that they are: 1) Getting the fire service ready for the effects of the ACA. 2) Dealing with safety issues around cancer, suicide, etc. 3) Building IAFC membership.

Chief Wall: What is the IAFC's most significant challenge right now? What is the solution? Chief Sinclair commented that there are currently competing forces within the IAFC. There are two different viewpoints: 1) To be a member-driven organization 2) To be a staff-driven organization. A few years ago the President created #2 and not #1. Part of the reason we are struggling is that we are putting more power in the hands of staff and this has alienated some of our members. We need to become a member-driven organization.

Chief Wall thanked Chief Sinclair for being on the call.

Chief Sinclair would appreciate an endorsement by VCOS. He told the VCOS board to let him know what he can ever do for VCOS.

Review/Approval of Minutes – Chief Wall
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The minutes from the February 13 VCOS board call were reviewed.

Motion by Chief Wilson and seconded by Chief Crutcher to approve minutes from the February 13 board call as submitted. Motion carried.

VCOS Elections Committee Update – Chief Wall

3 people may work with Chief Florentino on the committee.

The VCOS election schedule is as follows:

- Appoint committee by April 1st
- Names need to be submitted by May 1st
- Names confirmed for ballot by May 7th
- Ballots ready to go by June 1st
- Results into election committee by July 1st
- Made official at annual meeting in August

An email will go out the week of March 24th with all of the election details.

iWomen Update – Chief Larson

Chief Larson attended the iWomen’s conference in Tucson, Arizona a few weeks ago. Chief Laura Baker formally announced the partnership between VCOS and iWomen. Chief Larson staffed a VCOS booth at the conference and networked with others in attendance to spread the word about VCOS. It was a very eye-opening experience. Chief Larson encouraged everyone to talk to their women firefighters one-on-one and hear things from their perspective. There were representatives at the conference from other countries and all around the nation. Both men and women attended. Chief Larson thinks this partnership will go well and is important. He was hoping to get more interest at the VCOS booth, but he did talk to at least six people that were interested in becoming VCOS members. Chief Larson mentioned that there are not a lot of chief officer level members involved with iWomen from volunteer and combination departments. He stated that it might take VCOS a year or so to see the full benefits of the partnership.

Communications Committee Update – Chief Fulmer, Chief Crutcher, Chief Larson

App: The contract with the app company, Feathr, was signed and executed. They are starting the design work for the app. Chief Windisch will send high resolution VCOS logos.

Newsletter: The Communications Committee is collecting articles for the next newsletter. The next newsletter will go out before CFSI and focus on legislative issues. Ms. Fishkin found someone to do the newsletter design/layout work at the same rate as before. Only one article has been received so far.

Chief Crutcher and Chief Larson reported that the VCOS Facebook page is doing well and is being steadily updated with information. The stats from Facebook show we are reaching a lot more people than before.

Articles are being written about the iWomen partnership and also about Tampa 2. Chief Crutcher reminded board members to send him their bios.

VISION Project – Chief Wilson, Ms. Ameen

The VCOS Executive Committee, Chief Parr, Ms. Ameen, and Ms. Corinne Baker had a call yesterday to discuss the VISION project. The soft launch will be ready by the May board meeting. The full scale launch and marketing campaign will be conducted at FRI. The VCOS Executive Committee will stay involved and work with Chief Parr and IAFC staff to make sure this project remains a priority and gets implemented in a timely manner.

Chief Parr is doing a good job to get the project reinvigorated even while suffering from a bad back injury. Chief Wall mentioned that the VCOS board will have to pick up some of the VISION workload if current lane leaders don't complete their assignments.

During the soft launch, the VISION website will be sent to some other VCOS members to get their input and test it. VCOS board members can ask 1-2 people for feedback and then any feedback should be sent to Chief Parr and Ms. Ameen.

Tampa 2 – Chief Windisch, Chief Crutcher

Chiefs Windisch, Collins, Crutcher, Buckman, and Riley attended Tampa 2 to represent VCOS. Chief Eggleston attended on his own. This workshop had over 350 attendees from around the nation with the sole purpose of sharpening the saw to improve responders' safety and health. This ten year anniversary from the inaugural meeting enhanced the focus on the 16 Life Safety Initiatives. The NFFF is set to launch the Vulnerability Assessment Tool that will allow all of us to evaluate our own risk issues with suggested methods to reduce those risks. Various high energy speakers motivated the masses and the breakout groups carried that energy into their deliberations. VCOS was a financial sponsor to Tampa 2 and also provided VCOS pens in the attendee bags.

Chief Windisch stated that it was a fabulous workshop with high energy and it was very focused. The meeting helped to flush out more of the 16 Life Safety Initiatives. VCOS was recognized as a sponsor. He is currently looking into having Chief Griffin and Chief Sendelbach speak at the VCOS symposium. VCOS needs to continue its commitment to NFFF because it affects all of our members. Is there anything else we can do for NFFF at the symposium?

Chief Crutcher thought the event was well coordinated. There was great involvement from everyone. They had the right people engaged in important conversations to move forward. He mentioned that a big focus is now on the company officer level.

Chief Eggleston attended on behalf of his department. He mentioned that the IAFC's Safety, Health and Survival Section (SHS) had a meeting today about the 1582 medical/physical testing at the end of Tampa 2. The NVFC attended to represent volunteers, but VCOS should be involved going forward. VCOS needs to strengthen its relationship with SHS. Chief Eggleston will follow up with SHS on this. He mentioned that great recommendations came out of Tampa 2.

Labor Management Initiative – Chief Vaughn, Chief Larson

Chief Buckman asked VCOS if it could take the labor-management initiative (LMI) program and apply it to volunteer or combination staffed organizations.

Chiefs Vaughn, Morgan, Larson, and Wall had a conference call to discuss this idea.

Chief Larson commented that the conflict resolution piece could be very beneficial. There is potential helpful information about working with government agencies, boards of directors, city commissions, etc. Some other pieces of the program might need be relevant to volunteers.

Chief Lowden stated that the two-hatter issue flares up sometimes and that having the volunteer perspective represented is important.

Chief Eggleston had a chance to talk to Chief Buckman. A lot of volunteer departments don't have a relationship with their local government. This could allow them to explore models and agreements between local government and volunteer departments.

Chief Wall will talk to Mr. Mark Light and get Chiefs Morgan, Vaughn, and Larson on a call too if possible.

Chief Larson will send the LMI website information out to the board.

Letters of Appreciation

VCOS received two thank you letters. The first was from the IAFC Foundation for the \$100 donation on behalf of Chief Clemmensen. The other letter was from the NFFF thanking VCOS for the efforts with the stairclimb at the Symposium. The letters were sent out with the call agenda.

Training

The next VCOS webinar will be "Building Sturdy Relationships With Elected Officials" by Chief Grady on March 27 at 7:00 p.m. ET. Participants will receive tips on building solid relationships with elected officials to benefit their department and own future as a leader.

May Board Meeting – Chief Wall

The next live board meeting will be May 2-3 in Arlington, VA at Fire-Rescue Med. Board members should arrive Thursday evening or Friday morning. The board will meet starting around noon on Friday. There will be an all-day meeting on Saturday from approximately 9am-6pm. Board members can depart late Saturday or on Sunday. Chief Wall is working to schedule a meeting with the NVFC on Friday after the VCOS board meeting. Friday night there is a NVFC dinner in Alexandria. Chief Wall may also schedule some Friday morning meetings. DCA is the closest airport. Board members should send any agenda items to Chief Wall.

- Tentative Schedule:

- Arrive Thursday or Friday morning
- Friday: Meeting starts around noon. Guest speakers will attend and give updates. There will be a meeting with the NVFC and then a dinner.
- Saturday: Meeting from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Depart late Saturday (after 8 p.m.) or on Sunday

If anyone has an agenda topic for the meeting with the NVFC, send them to Chief Wall. We will be talking to them about promoting each other's awards, sharing website resources, etc.

Send your hotel room needs to Ms. Ameen.

VCOS 20th Anniversary

The commemorative coins have been ordered and will be ready for the May board meeting.

Chief Wall confirmed that the VCOS board wanted to start the 20th anniversary campaign and marketing in August at FRI since that is the true anniversary.

Chief Larson encouraged that the big celebration be held at the VCOS symposium.

Chief Windisch suggested that we dedicate the printed newsletter that goes out around August to historical information for the 20th anniversary.

Chief Crutcher said that they can definitely tie in the build-up for the symposium with the 20th anniversary history in the August newsletter. He also mentioned that he reached out to Mr. Paul Combs, the illustrator, to potentially do a fundraiser for NFFF at the symposium. If he can't do it this year then maybe he can do it later in 2015.

Roundtable and Committee/Project Updates

Chief Lowden – May 10 is his swearing-in as the Eastern Division representative on the IAFC board. Once this occurs, he will have to leave the VCOS board. Chief Wall thanked Chief Lowden for all the work he has done for VCOS. He said we'll wait until it's official before making any changes.

Chief Eggleston – There was an IAFC board call today. Representative Barletta's legislative was passed in house for the ACA. It was more symbolic than anything since the IRS already came out with the exemption. He also mentioned that he will be attending the Southeastern Association of Fire Chief's conference and will help coordinate a VCOS booth there.

Chief Larson – He is working on getting a VCOS booth at the Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Leadership Challenge in October.

Chief Wall – There is an ISFSI research grant opportunity that VCOS may get involved with. Chief Wall will talk to Mr. Mark Light about this. He will keep the Executive Committee updated. We need to get the various awards going. People in charge of the various awards need to come up with schedules, draft of the application, etc. Email Chief Wall by tomorrow if you want to attend the CFSI dinner.

IAFC 2nd Vice President - VCOS Board Open Discussion

The board discussed the two IAFC Second Vice Presidential candidates.

Chief Wilson – Sections are where the work gets done that represents membership. Chief Sinclair has been very involved with the IAFC at all levels. Chief Trauernicht has a lot of experience with California Fire Chiefs Association, but only some experience with the IAFC.

Chief Eggleston – He agreed with Chief Wilson’s comments. He also noted that Chief Sinclair has a great working relationship with VCOS.

Chief Lowden – He thought Chief Sinclair did a great job on the call of conveying his message and agrees he is well suited for the position.

Chief Larson – He echoed the same sentiments. Chief Sinclair has experience with VCOS and the EMS Section and will be a champion for the sections.

Chief Windisch – Chief Sinclair is an excellent guy and he did a lot of intense work while on the IAFC board. He understands the importance of sections within the IAFC. He would be perfect for the job.

Motion by Chief Wilson and seconded by Chief Larson for VCOS’ endorsement of Chief Sinclair for IAFC Second Vice President. Motion carried.

Chief Wilson will let both candidates know that VCOS has chosen to endorse Chief Sinclair.

Adjourned: 5:35 pm