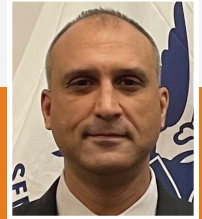




Election **2025** IAAI Candidates for Foundation Board of Directors



Matthew Hartnett (MA) IAAI Candidate for the Board of Directors

Elections will be open until noon (EDT) April 7, the results will be announced at the 2025 ITC General Meeting and on www.firearson.com.

In Ballot Order

How long have you been a member of the IAAI? 25 years (August 20, 1999)

How many annual meetings have you attended; Which Years? 8. 2004 St. Louis, 2014, Las Vegas, 2015 Chicago, 2016, Orlando, 2017 Las Vegas, 2019 Jacksonville, 2022 Jacksonville, 2024 Las Vegas.

What IAAI Committees Have you Served on; which years? Governmental Relations 2008 to 2019 and 2019 to the present in the formalized committee.

Do you regularly attend your state/provincial chapter meetings and activities? Yes

Offices held state/province chapter? Massachusetts President, Ohio Board Member, Rhode Island Member

Please list any international offices held, special projects or committee work, indicating years of service. Grant Review and Legislative Advocacy

Describe, in 100 words or less, why you feel you are qualified for this position: My 27-year career began as a firefighter and then progressed through fire investigator positions as a Deputy State Fire Marshal and ATF CFI. I also earned three degrees that help me apply science to real world cases.

While investigating fires, integrating live fire research into evidence, and simplifying science for testimony are my passions, teaching advanced methods to help other fire investigators succeed is becoming a passion too. ATF sends me across the U.S. and internationally to share our body of knowledge. My role is to advocate sharing ATF's vast training resources with IAAI members.

What would you say your greatest assets are if you become a director or officer of the IAAI? My greatest assets are threefold. First, I have learned a body of knowledge from investigating over 900 fires and contributing to successful determinations and prosecutions by using science. Next, I serve as a gateway for fire investigators to access the ATF's resources and capabilities, such as our Fire Research Lab (FRL), engineering staff, and International Training Programs Branch. Last, with the time remaining in my career, I desire to share my education, experience, learned methods, and best practices, to help fire investigators succeed in our profession.

What type of leader are you, and how would you apply those leadership traits as a director or officer of the IAAI? I practice Servant Leadership. I am not an organizational manager. However, I am often entrusted to lead the fire investigation process, which requires collaboration, inclusion, and placing successful science, discovery, and prosecution, over accumulating power or ego. Serving others, helping others grow by understanding our science, and building strong relationships, lends itself best to the fire investigation community. Servant Leadership also encompasses ethics to do the right thing, influencing others' behaviors and decisions through my own actions, listening to people, and trusting colleagues to do their role.

What steps do you believe the IAAI should take to reduce or eliminate membership shrinkage? We can reduce member shrinkage by reducing the reliance on in-person attendance at the ITC. We should provide more local, shorter, and online training opportunities. The IAAI needs to adapt and take training to them. We also need to increase the number of facilitators for the IAAI certification programs.

What steps do you believe the IAAI should take to grow membership? We can grow membership by improving the value proposition members receive. The IAAI should focus on building an accessible body of knowledge which includes fire science research, forensics, and valid testimony. The IAAI should then share this body of knowledge, and how to apply it, through high-quality training opportunities.

How would you propose to improve relationships and communications between the international and chapters? The continued use of web based meetings, in person attendance of Directors and Board Members at local meetings, and training. Direct follow-up from the IAAI to track Chapter leadership changes by having IAAI members of local chapters keep the IAAI informed directly of leadership changes even if appropriate documentation is not completed timely.

What is your vision for the future for the IAAI? Promoting a "Don't guess, be an expert." philosophy. Over the next ten years, the IAAI should focus on creating and archiving a body of knowledge for the fire investigation community and most importantly how to apply that information for a successful determination. Other technical professional groups serve as the archive and clearinghouse for their professions' body of knowledge. The IAAI should function as the leader of documenting and cataloguing best practices, proven methods, and fire science research, and the practical application of fire science in an investigation.

In my many years teaching and having polled students during those occasions, "legal issues" was/is always a topic that is consistently brought up as a concern. I believe that this data base could go a long way to relieving some of those concerns.

Other than training fire investigators, what two or three other elements do you consider as critical to the mission of the IAAI? Educating non fire investigators in the science of fire investigation, such as attorneys, and the considerations of expert witness testimony. Educating legislators and civic leaders about the societal impact of fires in their communities. Advocacy for the benefits of efficient, thorough, and effective fire investigations using science, to reduce negative effects of fires.

What do you perceive is the biggest challenge facing the IAAI in the coming years and how would you address that challenge? Our biggest challenge is staying relevant to the fire investigation community throughout the world. During my career our profession became more technical and complex, expanding from origin and cause to a forensic science discipline. The science of fire investigation is universal.

The IAAI can address that challenge by assisting investigators to adapt and learn new science, improving credibility and increasing reliability. The IAAI can become the fire investigation community's body of knowledge and source of world class training opportunities, continuing education, and synchronizing an IAAI-accredited curriculum for college degrees with our certification process.