



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



Tuomas Pälviä (Finland) 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? 14 years

How many annual meetings have you attended; Which Years? I have attended ITCs 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2024. I have attended the AGM on most of those years.

What IAAI Committees Have you Served on; which years?
International Advisory Panel 2023

Do you regularly attend your state/provincial chapter meetings and activities? Yes, as both a member and a presenter.

Offices held state/province chapter?

- Finland Chapter: Past president
- Europe Chapter: 2nd Vice President

Describe, in 100 words or less, why you feel you are qualified for this position: I have a long and international perspective on fire investigation and I have been involved in starting IAAI chapters 78 Finland and 81 Europe. I have investigated fires in three countries and attended training in seven countries and presented in training events in six countries. I am also the first CFI in Finland. I have also gathered leadership experience during the 15 years of management and leadership positions in the fire service. I strongly believe that this background makes me a valuable asset to IAAI in making the association the Global Leaders In Fire Investigation.

What would you say your greatest assets are if you become a director or officer of the IAAI? My greatest asset as an IAAI Director would be my international perspective on fire investigation and fire investigation training. Having been involved with the foundation of two chapters I understand the work it takes to start building a chapter and advancing the training and certification of fire investigators. Also coming from a non-English speaking small country provides insights into the various situations and need individual chapters might have.

What type of leader are you, and how would you apply those leadership traits as a director or officer of the IAAI? 15 years in fire service management and leadership positions have taught me the importance of communication. As a leader I try to maintain active dialogue between parties to create common understanding of current goals and progress of work and to discover when help is needed. My key values as a leader are authenticity and service. A leader should honestly be him/herself and speak honestly during the planning and preparation phases so that the leader can truly support the actions taken. The leader should serve the community or people she/he leads and support the success of the group.

What steps do you believe the IAAI should take to reduce or eliminate membership shrinkage? This issue does not have one simple solution. The causes for membership terminations should be analyzed if any way possible and take actions if some possibilities for improvement were found. One possibility would be to follow up on those members that let their membership expire and check that have they done it intentionally or by accident. This could provide insights into the reasons and nudge those that have forgotten their membership to return to the association.

What steps do you believe the IAAI should take to grow membership? I believe the market in the US is quite saturated and most of the fire investigators that want to join an association have already done so. Obviously, it is still important to advertise IAAI to attain new fire investigators to the association but I think that the greatest

potential to increase membership would come from overseas. From an international perspective the membership of IAAI is not cost effective if the investigator is not certified and does not travel to the ITC. Enabling chapters outside of the USA to localize the certifications and other materials would make membership for an international member much more attractive.

How would you propose to improve relationships and communications between the international and chapters?

Communication, co-operation and reaching out are the key aspects of improvement. Chapter Presidents Call is one example of a successful step taken to improve communications. The IAAI has many chapters and the needs of them vary. Some chapters might not need any support and have a steady program running but other chapters might have some development or support need. Discussing the needs of chapters and finding support and solutions would improve the relations and tighten the bond between chapter and the International. It is not reasonable to expect that the International could meet all the needs of the chapters but the International could connect other chapters with similar needs and the chapters could combine forces.

What is your vision for the future for the IAAI? The IAAI is on a good path moving forward. The IAAI has an active training calendar and Fire & Arson Investigator Journal steadily has interesting and high quality articles. I see the future of IAAI even more international than it is now. Expanding the IAAI network and sharing knowledge internationally can only benefit the profession as a whole.

Other than training fire investigators, what two or three other elements do you consider as critical to the mission of the IAAI?

As the Mission of IAAI is inspiring the international fire investigation community to achieve excellence the Chapters of IAAI are definitely a key element of that mission. The chapters serve the local fire investigation communities and provide training and advance the profession based on the local needs. The International alone without the chapters could not achieve the stated mission.

Sharing knowledge is one part of achieving excellence as it allows members stay informed on current issues and trend of the profession. Therefore, I think that publishing Fire & Arson Investigator Journal is a second critical element of the IAAI.

The third important part of the mission is the Awards Committee the IAAI has. Recognizing and celebrating excellence motivates the membership and creates an important legacy of the profession.

What do you perceive is the biggest challenge facing the IAAI in the coming years and how would you address that challenge?

Economy is an important part of running any large association. The International must work at the same time to maintain the cost of training and membership at an attractive level and on the other hand keep the association running with a positive cash flow.

The second challenge is achieving the role of Global Leadership in Fire Investigation. The membership and training are US centered at the moment. I strongly believe that the Global role can be improved via the chapters outside US based on the excellent work already done in the States. Gaining new members in to the IAAI community is a win-win situation for everyone.