
MEETING OF A MEETING OF VATSIM BOARD OF GOVERNORS
QUARTER 3 – 2015
SATURDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2015 20:00Z
LOCATION: ONLINE (TEAMSPEAK)

PRESENT:

- Kyle Ramsey (KR) – VATSIM President VATGOV1 (Chair)
- Mark Richards (MR) – VP Operations VATGOV2 (Minutes)
- Peter Nielsen (PN) – VP Regions VATGOV4
- Kieran Hardern (KH) – VP Web Services VATGOV6
- Justin Friedland (JF) – VP Marketing and Strategic Development VATGOV10 – attended at 20:49z
- Gunnar Lindahl (GL) – VP Supervisors VATGOV11
- Divya Patel (DP) – VP Pilot Training VATGOV14
- Nicola Felini (NF) – Regional Director North America (Guest) – left at 21:32z
- Anastasios Stefopoulos (AS) – Regional Director Asia (Guest) - attended at 20:29z
- Thomas Mathieu (TM) – Acting Regional Director Africa/Middle East (Guest)

1. WELCOME

Meeting opened at 20:04z. KR welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed MR to his first BoG meeting as the newly appointed VP Operations. The EC members were welcomed as guests to participate in the meeting, especially for the discussion around the future of VATSIM.

2. APOLOGIES

- Luca Benelli (LB) – VP Network Systems VATGOV3 – Proxy to KH
- Norman Blackburn (NB) – VP Conflict Resolution VATGOV8 – Proxy to GL
- Daniel Gomes (DG) – VP Membership VATGOV12 – Proxy to PN

3. VOTES SINCE THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There have been three votes since the last meeting, all of which have been published on the VATSIM.net website.

- Approval of the minutes of the Q2-2015 BoG meeting
- Appointment of VATSIM President (VATGOV1)
- Appointment of VATSIM Vice President Operations (VATGOV2)

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT (KR)

KR outlined the details of a recent meeting he had with George Maranakis (Founder) relating to future funding commitments for VATSIM and the possibility of registering as a not-for-profit organisation with respect to U.S. tax law. George provided KR with some good insight into what effect this could have long term.

While with George, KR took the opportunity to discuss the Founders view on the future direction of

VATSIM. Both George and Richard Jenkins felt that we have relied on too much of previous history and not to be afraid of challenging history in order to drive change to keep VATSIM meeting the needs of members and the challenges ahead and that the Founders look to the BoG as the ones to challenge the status quo.

KR also outlined two open TeamSpeak meetings held with the membership of the North America Region and the UK Division. Both meetings went really well and much more productive than anticipated. Both were very constructive. DG and KH supported KR at the UK meeting and this helped to answer some technical questions from the members. KR is keen to hold more of these meetings around the globe, as it is an excellent avenue for him to hear the views of the membership and for the membership to have a voice.

5. PROPOSAL FOR VATSIM WORLDWIDE CONVENTION (KH/GL)

KH outlined details of a proposal for a Worldwide VATSIM Convention in 2017 submitted by two members. The proposal had been distributed to BoG members in the weeks leading up to the meeting and had been subject of considerable discussion in the BoG email ring.

This discussion had highlighted that there is no formal process for the membership to present a proposal for a global convention, especially as the proposal submitted saw the next convention being hosted in the Europe region for the second time running. That notwithstanding, it was considered that a convention in 2017 had given sufficient time for another location to have submitted an application and given that Europe had the highest percentage of VATSIM members was more likely to attract a bigger attendance.

GL suggested that VATSIM create a formalised framework for members to propose a worldwide convention. This framework could include that proposals be submitted by 1 October two years ahead of the meeting (i.e. a convention in 2017 should be proposed by 1 October 2015).

DP suggested that we could consider linking with an existing Flightsim convention to leverage off the crowd numbers. It was agreed that this would be a good local initiative but that it shouldn't necessarily detract from a global convention.

Motion: Moved KH Seconded GL: *"To approve the creation of a Global Convention in 2017. The authors of the proposal to be allowed to proceed with the understanding that certain areas are subject to BoG input/stipulations"*. **MOTION CARRIED 9-1**

ACTION: KH and GL to engage with the authors of the proposal to indicate the BoG's support for the Convention in 2017.

6. PLANNED VOICE PROTOCOL UPDATE (KH)

KH addressed the meeting regarding the current voice protocol used online today, with specific reference to the old codec (and therefore quality). KH has been working with a group of developers, who are investigating a possibility of backwards compatibility of a new codec with existing clients but this is reliant on cooperation and support by the developers. KH has entered into discussions with the developers of the approved Pilot and Controller clients to implement an improved voice codec, feedback and participation has been positive.

Unfortunately, there is not going to be a way for FSInn to be included in the improvements. KH therefore highlighted to the BoG that long-term FSInn may have to be retired, though his plan for this was subject to suitable replacement. The BoG was conscious of the popularity of FSInn amongst the membership and so discussed potential timescale and replacement options. JF offered to attempt to re-engage with the FSInn developers if they can be located.

It is important that VATSIM looks at ongoing support of older clients to ensure that they meet the needs of VATSIM today and to maintain contact with developers. There are no immediate plans to retire any current clients. No pilot client would be withdrawn until a suitable cross-platform client was available to the membership. Updating clients should be in a long-term plan for consideration in years not months.

Motion: Moved KH Seconded MR: *"To move into executive session"*. **MOTION CARRIED** at 20:51z

Motion: Moved KH Seconded MR: *"To move out of executive session"*. **MOTION CARRIED** at 20:54z

7. 2020: A VATSIM ODYSSEY (KR)

KR outlined his need for VATSIM to have vision for 2020 and beyond. He had called for initial input from the BoG and EC and had now widened this further by calling for submissions from the VATSIM Worldwide staff email ring for their input into how we can drive change for VATSIM for the future.

GL spoke to some his suggestions about membership growth.

KH voiced concerns about the number of suggestions that had a technical component and this would see many challenges, as they take longer to implement. This sentiment was echoed by those present and we therefore need to ensure a balance between any changes that have a technical component with a preference to those that can implemented with changes that might need a policy update or some commitment to do things differently to our tradition.

There was significant discussion about a number of the ideas that had come forward so far but it was agreed that these all needed to be tabled properly as separate agenda items and discussed with sufficient time to prepare our responses. This would be better done once we have a tabulated list of all things for consideration.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

a. SUPERVISOR PRIORITIES (GL)

Discussion was held about Supervisor's interactions with members and where their priority should be spent in dealing with CoC breaches. Feedback from the membership indicated that the messages Supervisors send about breaches of the Code of Conduct should be focused on detracting from the enjoyment of members or from the principles of VATSIM's existence (i.e. flying or controlling and interacting with other people online).

The BoG discussed the need for CoC Section A (9) and how often the reason for it was being confused by members and supervisors alike. It was agreed that the A (9) was necessary to ensure that all members of VATSIM enjoyed the Network and to ensure that pilots were checking whether ATC were online at a minimum of every 30 minutes and that being online was about interacting with other members, pilots and controllers. There was a misconception that A (9) was about the cost of bandwidth but given the costs and availability of bandwidth now, this concern was no longer the main reason.

ACTION: GL to form a small working group to identify Supervisor priorities and interaction with members.

b. FLIGHTSIM SHOWS (KR)

Following on from the discussion about the Worldwide VATSIM Convention, JF questioned whether instead of a worldwide convention, VATSIM should be leveraging off existing Flightsim conventions, shows and real world air shows to showcase VATSIM to the public in order to attract new members.

The meeting felt that in an ideal world, local Regions/Divisions etc. would participate in local shows and that we make resources available to them in support of the initiatives. It was also felt that a

worldwide convention was a good opportunity to provide some support back into the existing membership and have them share ideas and look at future opportunities.

c. *BOG VP REPORTS (GL)*

GL suggested that at each BoG meeting that each member of the BoG should report on issues and activities. This should be a brief report and outside of what should be in a separate agenda item for more significant issues or discussions. It was agreed that each VP should report only what was relevant for their department and activities but that it was expected that each should report at least twice per year.

d. *USE OF VATSIM BY 'FOR PROFIT' ORGANISATIONS (JF)*

JF initiated discussion about the requirements of the User Agreement with respect to organisations using VATSIM's intellectual property to make a profit. JF flagged concerns that members should not use VATSIM for financial gain. Updating this is not in the BoG's current plan of works but should be considered during the 2020 Vision work.

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 22:26z.

Next Meeting Saturday 16 January 2016 at 20:00z
