VATSIM Board of Governors'

Meeting Minutes

20th March 2010

I. Agenda

Old Business
• Pilot Ratings Update (Kyle R)
• New VATSIM Website Review (Florian H)
• Commercial Activities (Terry S)

New Business
• Recognize Senior Staff Members (General Discussion)
• Leadership Conduct and CoC (Kyle R)
• FSS issues during VATPAC Trial (Luca, Mike and Terry)
• Continuity of Operations (Dave K)

• Other Business

II. Call to order

David Klain called to order the regular meeting of the **VATSIM Board of Governors'** at **1207z** on **20th March, 2010** online **via TeamSpeak**.

III. Register

David called the register. The following persons were present:

David Klain - holds Mike Evans proxy
Luca Benelli
Roland Collins
Steven Cullen
Kyle Ramsey
Florian Harms
Jim Johnson
Terry Scanlan
Norman Blackburn – Holds Michael Z proxy

Apologies:
Michael Zazula
Mike Evans

Total votes available - 11

IV. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Previous minutes not tabled. – Approved by BoG vote and distributed 19th October 2009.

V. Old Business

a) Pilot Ratings

David Klain invited Kyle to provide an update on the VATSIM Pilot Ratings Scheme. Kyle stated that a conscious decision was made back in December to place the program on hold over the holiday period, as Mike Evans was busy with the new website. Since then the new website has gone up, it has been

running for a month (Kyle expressed his thanks to Florian for the new website and his leadership during the build up to release of the website). It was decided back in December/January that the program would be stepped up again in March after the website had time to settle and any issues/bugs to be sorted, this has happened and the program has been stepped up again. During the down time conversations did not stop, the forum became a little quiet but Kyle's Skype was quite busy with people giving suggestions, during conversations it became apparent there were some quandaries.

As an American it would be easy to base the ratings on the FAA system, have a written test, have a practical test and because it is a lot of work we will let the ATO's (Authorised Training Organisations) do all the heavy lifting for us. When you let this work its way through it is written in English, which is great for English speakers but not so great if you live in Russia, you live in France, you live in China, you live in Japan, the list is kind of long in places where people don't really speak English, this makes it hard for us as a global organisation. To overcome this we are going to write the criteria for each level, right now we have in front of us P1 which really is a basic entry level you understand the mechanisms of VATSIM, you can get logged on, file a flight plan, and you can make a flight successfully. Kyle pointed us to the forum discussions which centered around the possible content for P1, such as METAR's. Kyle stated that the P1 criteria was 95% complete and he hoped to complete the criteria this weekend, with a proposal of the criteria being posted to the user group for discussion. The document will be a living document.

ATO's will be able to conduct the training and assessments in a manner that suits their needs, within the confines of maintaining alignment to the training criteria. How they assess the pilots is the responsibility of the ATO, they must be able to demonstrate an ability to provide feedback, show a consistent approach to the assessment.

Kyle expects to be able to put the call out for ATO's in approximately in two weeks, along with the criteria for P1.

Kyle stated that there is a need to have a system similar to the supervisors to sign up members to the VATGOV14 office, who are native language (Non English speaking) members who would periodically "inspect" the ATO's to confirm that they are complying with the criteria for pilot ratings, that the assessment systems in place are fair.

What is not ready is the ratings have not been built into the system yet and we do not have a "front end" where the ATO's Chief Pilot could issue ratings for people who qualified through their organisation.

Jim Johnson asked if the current supervisors could be used to check the non English language organizations, Kyle said he was fine with that, but the person should have a private or commercial license in the area that they would be representing or some other background in pilot operations.

Florian stated he agreed with the local language ideas, but asked that the face to face idea not be dropped as it enhanced the feeling of the community, that one was part of the community. Florian stated that the idea of the website (front end) updating the pilot ratings was not going to be a real challenge.

Norman made comment about the forum post regarding using RD and DD; he commented that he had read the post as saying that instead of writing the program from scratch in the local language that members are 'employed' to simply rewrite the English version into the local language. Norman is agreement with current proposals, he wishes to point out we have supervisors in place who have the skills and abilities to translate the written components.

Roland pointed out that there is already an established translator team, who managed to translate the Squawkbox manuals within a few days.

David asked, if a pilot completing PP2 training in Germany has learned a different set of rules to a pilot doing the P2 in the States or the P2 in China does anyone see a difficulty in this and secondly do the pilot ratings have a divisional stamp on them. Roland answered that currently in the real world the pilot with a German license can fly in Australia, Japan, and the United States without any issues what so ever without any standard or competency is not checked so this is a step in the right direction. Terry followed

up Roland's comments with his agreement, and that we should have generic competencies we should avoid saying that a P2 endorsement for Germany is not valid for anywhere else, if you have a P2 it is valid anywhere. Jim agrees that there is no reason to make it a division or regional endorsement.

David pointed out the way ahead then is to talk with Mike to confirm the changes to Cert, to have the additional data field in the table, to build the front end to grant ratings, and the next step is for Kyle to go to the Regional Director to have people appointed from each division to be their lead folks on checking out ATO's, co-ordination etc, a pilot training liaison. Kyle agreed.

Florian asked if it is possible that later we can split the controller rating from the administrator rating. David explained the reasons behind the current set up. Changes to controller ratings systems would require changes to all ATC clients.

b) **New VATSIM Website Review (Florian H)**

VATSIM website is doing fairly well. Florian started recording statistics mid February with approx 66000 page visits in February and 77000 visits in March. The website has been accepted by the community, there a couple areas that are not set up in the website, due to technical issues, such as membership issues.

The membership creation page (new members) needs urgent up-grade; we need to think is this going to attract new members.

One of the new items Florian wishes to have on the website is the number of members updating automatically, we have a large number of members and we should show it, also to show how many members are currently online.

Overall Florian is very satisfied with the outcome of website, and thanks Terry and Kyle with his pilot training team for embedding content into the new website. He also thanked Steven.

Terry asked if Florian had a chance to look at the Pilot Stories submitted by members, Florian responded in the affirmative saying that it is something he would also like to include in the new magazine which is currently under development.

David commented that he would like to make it a little easier to find things in the website for example it took him a little while to find the Board of Governor's minutes where. Florian stated that he would look at the issue, and that normally you should be able to find everything in the jump menu on the right hand side.

Florian stated that he feels we are currently on the limits of what we can do with this server; David asked if this is what Mike had told him to which Florian replied "no, it was a feeling." The time the server is taking to render to the website is excessive; David suggests Florian discusses the issues with Mike.

Roland states that the websites that work best for him have the navigation menus across the top of the page. Florian stated that it would take a few days to look at changing the navigation menus, but the menu over the top of the page does not work for this site.

Terry stated that the website works differently for Internet Explorer 8 as to Firefox; there is more function in Firefox. Additionally the BoG and EC minutes are available if you log into the website. Florian stated that the EC minutes could be moved into the public arena. David stated we need to educate about logging in.

c) **Commercial Activities (Terry S)**

Following on from the last meeting there were several items to address which involved commercial activities, some of these have been put to the founders to address. We have had replies back which have basically declined the requests. One of them was from a member who was making a bid to

purchase/buy a FBO and he wanted to set up a system where he could training his real world pilots in phraseology, basically to get them used to using the right phraseology and he was offering to put up a server, he was put in touch with Luca regarding the server, the Founder's where not that interested in his offer and terry thinks that this will close of naturally.

The other item was VATUK are seeking approval to obtain donations to start up a new UK server, there was some confusion with the Founders as it got mixed up with selling T-Shirts they thought he wanted to sell polo shirts to raise money for the server which of course is not on, that was not their intention.

Another item was the Electronic Flight Bag, the producer wanted to access VATSIM data that he could display in the electronic flight bag. This has been rejected by the Founders, to which the producer has come back and said that there are other products making use of the data and he wants to know what is the difference between his product and the other commercial products, this is still in discussions.

Kyle asked if there was any progress on the possibility of sales of T-Shirts etc with the VATSIM logo, Terry explained that there had been no further progress, and that it had been discussed at the last meeting what IVAO where doing and we thought we could look at our options. The whole thing is based around the ownership of the VATSIM logo and that is the thing we want to promote, and the Founders are very loathe in allowing the use of it in the sale of merchandise.

Florian stated it was very important to allow our members to show off our colors, David replied that this is understood and recognized.

VI. Leadership New Business

a) Recognize Senior Staff Members (General Discussion)

David welcomed Jim Johnson to the Board of Governors.

Two items have been recognized for discussion:
1. Recognizing long term contributors to VATSIM
2. Members who had done good things in staff positions

Terry stated this is a very difficult subject, one that we should not walk away from but it one that will not be resolved this evening and that possibly we should take these discussions to email. We have to make sure it is not seen by the members as staff hanging tickets on themselves, do we need to have several different categories of recognition, and there are certainly members who have never held staff positions who have supported VATSIM and deserve to be recognized. Terry suggested a working party to be formed to come up with suggestions on how to proceed with recognition of member's services and support.

Steven suggested once discussions got underway that the program be handed to the EC and it becomes their "award". David agreed that getting the EC involved is a big part of the program. David tabled this to move further discussions to the email list.

b) Leadership Conduct and CoC (Kyle R)

Kyle advocates the adding of a few lines to the CoC or CoR that recognizes that when a person takes on a staff role or leadership position within VATSIM it also means that they take on a role of higher responsibility for their actions, upholding the values of VATSIM and role modeling those values and role modeling the CoC/CoR.

There needs to a provision if the holder of an office of VATSIM is temporarily unavailable that an assistant can be appointed to allow the function of that office to continue.

Lastly as an ambassador of VATSIM you must not bad mouth VATSIM in public; you must uphold the united front. There are avenues in private where you can criticize policy or core items which are going on. If you are going to wear the badge of VATSIM, be a leader of VATSIM then you must support the values of VATSIM or support others who do not uphold these values.

Norman stated that we have rules in place that covers this and he sees no need for putting new rules into place. Roland states the CoR covers RD, BoG, Founders and DD, Roland thinks that Kyle means for the rules reach further down. Kyle stated he feels there is a need to provide additional rules above those of the general members.

Jim asked does it need to be a public document, can it be like the supervisors where it is made very clear to you on taking up office what is expected from you. Kyle has no issue with this model. Terry said that we could put a sticky in the new staff forum and staff email lists the responsibilities of being a staff member.

David asked if we need to move this to the email list. Florian asked can we set up a welcome email for new staff members that thanks them for their assistance and explains the responsibilities of office.

Steven agrees with what has been discussed but thinks it needs to be (or parts at least) an official document to cover arguments over validity of the rule.

Roland suggested adding section "D" to the CoC to cover staff behavior, and needs to be seen by general members.

Discussions will be moved to email.

c) **FSS issues during VATPAC Trial (Luca, Mike and Terry)**

Luca stated he has seen no issues arise on the servers as a result of this trial. Terry stated that the VATPAC staff are preparing a submission to be granted permission to continue using FSS on a permanent basis. The VATPAC tests found no issues with interference with other ATC centers in the area; they consider the trial to be a success. Luca stated that the Oceania has no load issues nor has he seen any large number of disconnects. Mike stated via report to David there were no issues arising from this trial, and it was his recommendation that assuming that VATPAC wants to go forward we approve their request. We need to formalize the list of FIR's that require FSS. David officially called the test a success.

Roland asked if it needs to become part of the GRP, David replied it may become a part of appendix B of the GRP where Oceanic Control is located, with a third list of authorized positions using the FSS call sign or login, with the EC providing management.

A vote to authorize the use of FSS to be managed by the EC and as a list in the appendix B of the GRP was put forward by David Klain and seconded by Terry Scanlan.

The role was called and votes recorded. The result was unanimous for, with the inclusion of the proxy votes.

d) **Continuity of Operations (Dave K)**

David mentioned the issue first came up in 2005/2006 and the issue is what happens if key position holders get hit by a bus or something. Currently we have people with key passwords or system access who if they where to go away we would have a real problem on our hands. We have some backups and duplications but we are not where we need to be. In discussions with the Founders it was recognized we need a continuity of operations plan, like most big business and governments have. What it means is we have a record of all passwords and systems access not members passwords but administrators or root level passwords to things such as php/cert/mysql etc, so that if the person who normally does that goes

away we can still keep doing business. Additionally we need a backup to cover if someone goes offline or becomes ill for an extended period of time. On the recommendation of George M, David will be contacting members with these access and passwords to compile a list of the passwords that will be kept on file with George, this way if we have a problem we can get into the systems.

Terry voiced his support for this system.

Luca stated that it is not the passwords so much that is the issue, but the knowledge base. David said this is correct and is part 2 of the plan and David will be discussing the backup plans when he discusses passwords with key members. David agreed it is complex, but is solvable.

e) **Other Business**

Executive Session at 13:36z.

Executive session ends 13:54z

VII. **Adjournment**

David Klain called to adjourn the meeting, seconded by **Kyle Ramsey**. Meeting adjourned at **13:55z**. The next quarterly meeting is due June 2010. The next meeting date is to be advised.

Minutes submitted by: **Steven Cullen – VATSIM Vice President Communications**

Minutes approved by: **BoG vote**