



VATSIM Board of Governors'

Meeting Minutes

19th June 2010

Agenda

Old Business

- Pilot Ratings Update (Kyle R)
- Recognizing Staff (General Discussion)
- Leadership Conduct (General Discussion)
- Continuity of Operations (Dave)

New Business

- Broadcast Policy Review (Steven)
- ATC Elitism and Ultra Realism at Pilot's Expense (Steven)
- Voice Use When Cockpit Sharing (Norm)
- Local Rules (Roland)
- VP-Supervisors vote – moved to the top of the agenda

Other Business

- Pilot Clients (numerous requests from members)
- VATSIM – State of The Nation Notam – Dave
- New Division in VATASIA - Roland

Call to order

David Klain called to order the regular meeting of the VATSIM Board of Governors' at 1208z on 19th June, 2010 online via TeamSpeak.

Register

David called the register. The following persons were present:

David Klain – holds Wade Williams proxy
Florian Harms
Jim Johnson
Mike Evans – holds Luca Benelli proxy
Roland Collins
Steven Cullen
Terry Scanlan
Norman Blackburn – holds Michael Z proxy
Kyle Ramsay – arrived 12:15z

Apologies:
Michael Zazula
Luca Benelli
Wade Williams

Total votes available – 12

Approval of minutes from last meeting

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

New Business – Change in Agenda order due to special circumstance

a) VP-Supervisors vote

On the request of Norman Blackburn and the acknowledgement of the importance of the situation it was agreed to make the VP – Supervisors vote the first agenda item of the night.

Executive session entered – 12:09z

Executive Session ended – 12:24z

Following a vote by the current Board of Governors, William Alderson has been elected to the position of VP – Supervisors, VATGOV 11.

Old Business

a) Pilot Ratings

David Klain asked Kyle to provide an update on the VATSIM Pilot Ratings Scheme. Kyle stated that he is right on the cusp of putting up the document to solicit for beta testers for the ATO's (Accredited Training Organisations) and get started on PI. The last couple of pieces missing is the automation side, the ability to build an interface that the ATO's can use and the VATGOV 14 office can use to issue the actual ratings. That requires restructuring of the database and the adding of a field for the pilot ratings and things like that. Once that is figured out we also need to have the ratings displayed in places like the statistics and any other place that makes sense. A requirements document for the automated system is approximately 80% complete, in the past this has been seen as a gate to moving forward, this is not the case now; the beta can be done without the automation in place. Kyle can use feedback from the beta organisations to gauge what the ATO's want or need in the automation interface, the 80% document will go out to the ATO's and let them tweak it from there. It will then be sent to Mike (Evans) who can then code it up.

Kyle has one more trip away, he is returning Tuesday afternoon, and will then be focusing on getting the P1 ATO beta document out and getting 4 or 5 ATO's going. Kyle stated that he already has a couple of volunteers so he anticipates he will get started fairly promptly. That is where the program is at.

David Klain asked for comments or questions.

Florian Harms asked how are the local divisions and regions involved in the program, is there any feedback from them?

Kyle responded that he has had some feedback, he was having continued conversations with VATEUR, but the good news is that they have reached an agreement with VATEUR agreeing to participate in the program, and Kyle hopes that they will join as one of the beta testers. ZLA (Los Angeles) is going to jump in, and others that Kyle has been talking to are independents/VA, not divisions or anything. Kyle said that the door is open to any division.

David Klain asked a question relating to Mike and the database changes, specifically Cert to accommodate the new field, obviously this is adding a new field and scripting and stuff but where do we sit on our ability to execute that?

Mike replied: He has not seen the requirements document yet so he is not entirely sure of what it entails, but adding a field to cert is a 30 second operation. Mike said the bigger question is how and where we are going to display this thing, as there is nothing in the server that will be able to deal with this without a code change and that is not going to happen in the near future. Putting it on the stats page is relatively easy, as to where else to put it, that is up for discussion. Kyle stated that the only place he has it displayed is on the stats page, as Mike said he does not have any code prepared that recognizes the rating and have any client or other entity do anything with it. David stated that the only other place he can think of where he would like to see it is on the member cert page, the same as the controller rating display. David asked Mike if this would be a simple one addition of php line to pull that data field then display it. Mike said yes, that would be right below the controller rating and would not be a problem.

David continued by asking Kyle to get together with Mike on field parameters and that kind of stuff, numbers etc. he could probably build it so it is at least ready for testing if not for going live. Kyle is going to send over the 80% complete document to Mike, and Mike will see where the gaps are and know the answer or see the flexibility that Kyle is trying to get into the program, Kyle does not expect Mike to have any difficulty. David said the worst that will happen is that the fields will appear blank or with a no rating entry, a zero. Kyle confirmed that the PO is the default rating for everyone. David asked Mike to go ahead and bring it up live when time permits that way we can at least see it.

Kyle stated that it has occurred to him that there needs to be new scripting added for when people sign up, as this is a new field that will need to be prepopulated and there is nothing in the code to do this currently. It was agreed by Mike that this would be taken care of by a simple SQL add line.

Florian concluded the discussion with his question to Kyle on whether there was plans for a questionnaire or something similar to set up the rating, and if yes how is this being done. Kyle responded by saying that the ATO's will own all the material, all we are going to own are the VATSIM requirements, these are the requirements a member needs to be able to pass in order to be awarded a rating. We are not concerned with the methodology, we are not forcing any ATO to conduct the assessments in any manner such as written or recorded assessments, it is the ATO's choice, all we are concerned with is that the material conveyed to the member in a manner they can understand. We supply the requirements document and the ATO's inform us how they will meet that. This also allows the program to operate in far more members speaking different languages, as VATSIM would only be able to maintain a written test in a few languages. Kyle is also soliciting/pushing for ATO's that have the capability for grandfathering, take a member who has been with VATSIM for 6 months or more and walk then through the P1 is an hour or so, and stuff like that. One of Kyle's desires is to make it easy for existing members to take the rating they want.

David stated that it looks like we are making the right progress here, going forward.

b) Recognizing Staff

This topic was also mentioned in the previous meeting and we are following up from there, David opened the floor to anyone with questions or comments.

Terry said that he raised this topic again because we did not come to any real conclusion to how this would go forward, and it was thought to involve the EC as well. One of the issues is that we have such a large population that deserves recognition; how we structure the recognition process, whether there will be different parts, whether it is for staff, whether it is for general membership, whether it is for long serving members or what. There is quite a lot that needs to be done before we can even consider

whose' name we put forward, so we need to organize or get a structure going first and we need to consult with the EC on this, get a committee going between a couple of BoG members and a couple of EC members and try and structure something we can put names to before we go any further.

David agreed, and stated that he recalled we talked about it, we got to a two tiered proposed recognition, one of them being a wall of honor which was going to be for people who had done something really spectacular for VATSIM and the other one was a more real time which might go to controllers or pilots who had done something really great that quarter or someone who organized a major event or something like that. We did agree that we needed EC involvement and get their thoughts and the discussion on the email list had indicated that the Founders were receptive to the idea of the wall of honor thing or something like that, which would be a permanent type of thing. David thought we had agreed to the EC involvement and we had done that. Terry stated that we had not and he had no response from the other BoG members when asked to join the committee, and had been let slip. David asked Roland as the VP Regions to work this with Terry. Roland agreed stating he had not responded earlier thinking it was a given that his role would include him in the committee. Kyle will be third BoG member on the committee, who with the EC will come up with a proposal on how this will happen. It is hoped that this will be discussed at the next EC and BoG meeting and/or via email and a resolution/approval can be voted on at the next BoG meeting. Terry was confirmed as the chair person for the committee.

c) Leadership Conduct

Terry reminded the group that Kyle had originally brought this topic to the BoG a meeting or two back and we had not moved forward. Kyle then explained that it was either few lines to the current CoC or off CoC and post something in the forums or something like that, and it was just a few additional pieces around if you accept a leadership position within VATSIM we kind of expect you to be a VATSIM cheerleader. You still have plenty of avenues to voice concerns, moan and complain like everyone else in private, but in public we would like people in leadership positions uphold the values of VATSIM a little bit more. Some of this goes back into the "Member X" period and some of the other issues we have to put up with, and it really "rolls my stomach" when we see somebody with a significant VATSIM leadership title turn into a potty mouth back stabber, dragging VATSIM through the mud type of thing. If you want to do that, resign first.

David stated he remembered the issue, and conversations were held over censorship and that type of stuff, and he understands the spirit of what Kyle was saying. David went on to say that if nothing else this was something that was needed to be discussed with applicants before they were hired and put into a staff position. It goes into expectations, we have an expectation that VATSIM staff will conduct themselves with a certain decorum and hold themselves to a higher standard, for example if you are a supervisor you should not go around being busted for unattended connections, because you are breaking the rules or being a disruptive pilot or whatever the case maybe.

Whatever it is whether a forum post or something discussed before hiring someone there needs to be an expectation terms of behaviour that we hold to a higher standard than general membership. Kyle agreed that this is exactly what he means.

Roland stated that he believes that this is allied with the issues of confidentiality. A person in a staff position is privy to a lot of information that requires confidentiality; they are not free to take that information and to put it in the forums because they are upset over something. David said this was a great point and went on to say that we need to formally acknowledge in some way that access to Cert is for official needs only related to their VATSIM duties they are not allowed to share that information with anyone who does not also have access to cert for VATSIM duties, etc.

Maybe a VATSIM Staff agreement needs to be prepared, that lays out that on being appointed to a staff position expected conduct, access to VATSIM resources. We ask them to sign it, scan it, and send it back. Somebody would have to be the keeper of all the agreements that way if we ever find out

someone has been doing something bad we do not have to go through the rigmarole we have had to in the past, we can hold the agreement against them, and it is justification to fire them.

Roland said he thought this should sit with membership, David agreed. Mike said he can add a page to Cert, so that the first time you log into Cert you have to agree before you can move along. David said that was great, that in addition to having them sign something would be a huge benefit.

Jim states that he already sends people an email with basic guidelines when they first get access to cert. He stated that he could substitute any other forms with this email before he grants the access.

Florian stated that he wanted to know where we would set the limit, because everyone who was in a management position, in the BoG or EC, the Regions and Divisions has a job to do and limited information like this and has a duty not to publish is fully agreed. It is a question of where we draw the line and if it would make sense to look through the different vACC's to remember that those people in charge in those positions to follow this means we are here for flight simulation, network fun, and so forth and it's your job and you are here for the community, which is the most important thing.

David responded he was envisioning a VATSIM logoed document which opens with, "you have been..." the following are relevant to your appointment, the first thing being taken verbatim from the Founders letter talking about the spirit and intent of VATSIM and it is laid out clearly in writing. The next one is an expectation of privacy and access to member information and it is only to be used for VATSIM and due to privacy regulations and the User Agreement and other things means no abuse, no access for other things. The third item deals with conduct and we hold you to a higher standard and we expect you to conduct yourselves appropriately, failure to do so could result in your removal from your staff position. George would review the document to make it was legal.

Florian and Steven agreed to work with Kyle to make a draft of the language to be used in the letter, which will then be voted on. Once agreed to the language regarding Cert will be added to a pre-access page by Mike.

d) Continuity of Operations

David said he would make this a real quick segment; the short term answer is that he has not progressed anything since the last meeting. He realises the need to do it, and has time coming available to do it within the next few weeks. He will be sending out emails to the appropriate people, and will be discussing it with Mike today (day of meeting), dealing with putting the records together.

New Business - Continued

b) Broadcast Policy Review

Steven stated that he has sent out a request for submissions/comments/suggestion for the VATSIM Broadcast Message policy, with approximately 12 responses, with the majority supporting the policy.

Proposed changes to the policy include a formatted message template for controller exams, which provides a concise and to the point message, without waffling on. It also asks that members name not be broadcast as part of the message. Additionally Steven has added another guideline stating that the message should be current, and not used to broadcast messages in the future, i.e. exams happening next week.

Jim responded saying he believes the supervisor should be given as much discretion as possible to use their own judgment, and he wonders why we are making the changes to the standardize format and what are the reasons behind that regarding the members name. David explained the history behind having the Broadcast message policy including the unequal application of providing messages and the supervisors being harassed over message broadcasts. Steven also explained the reasons behind the changes being that responses had included that certain areas/supervisors become long winded in their broadcast messages, with some messages several lines long. The idea behind removing member's names from the messages was that it was not deemed necessary for the message. Jim stated that he understands the historical aspect, he disagrees with limiting the format of the message, he likes the way he has been seeing the messages and feels the name in the message adds a personal touch/feeling to the network. Steven offered to work with Jim and another BoG member to work on the format issue and include member's names if this is deemed appropriate. Roland stated that this is new to us, and his immediate reaction was the name is not really relevant, the object of the broadcast is to get traffic and the test is the reason and the person under test should not be discussed or released. Florian stated that from his experience the traffic coming is only one or two and that normally a pilot would not switch just for an hour checkout. Florian thinks we maybe being too hard on this, he stated that when he is on as a supervisor or administrator and someone advises that they need traffic for an exam his normal procedure is to ask the person requesting the information to send him the text and he just sends it on. He does not think asking to have a message in the standard format will work; the important thing is to make the message as short as possible. Steven said that was the aim of formatting the text to make the message as short as possible. Florian said the difference is saying this is the text or this has to be the text on it. David stated that everyone has raised valid points and offered a way ahead. He stated that maybe we look at changing the wording to recommend the suggested format, and that adding the name does make the message more personable to the members and that a role of the Governors is to make the network more personable and help make this hobby environment, that we are friends and we are having fun and that kind of stuff, and maybe adding the name does that, in by it is a person not just an notam. David suggested that Steven, Roland, Florian and Jim meet via email and discuss the messages further; there was no reason to wait for the next BoG meeting they can report back to the group by way of email. All agreed this was a good solution. Steven stated he would make some initial word changes and send it to the others for discussion and further refinement.

c) ATC Elitism and Ultra Realism at Pilot's Expense

Steven stated that he was hesitant to go forward on this item in the meeting due to that when he first asked for the topic to be added to the agenda he was hot under the collar following a bad online experience with a controller rebuking his duties and calling a supervisor due to the flight plan filed. Steven stated that he would prefer to take this to the BoG email and discuss it there. David accepted this and said we are aware their ongoing issues with this type of thing but we can discuss this via email. Florian said the ultra-realistic controller who is missing to give the pilot the feeling that he or she is welcome is not doing his job. Kyle voiced his support for work done in this area and mentioned the work needs to be done in both areas as the ultra-realistic pilot making demands of controllers is no better, and the question is how do we get back to the fun of the hobby and get off the ultra-realism and why don't we just enjoy ourselves. Terry added his support to this as well and retold of an experience he had that evening whilst flying his controller had a new pilot who filed direct to his destination, when asked if he meant this the pilot responded yes, because he did not understand the flight plan. The controller then led that pilot the entire way, held his hand through the entire flight and it was very encouraging to see this behavior. David said as BoG we need to keep pushing the message of fun and enjoyment at all levels and in all of our communications. It needs to be the message of the leaders at all levels; this is the spirit of VATSIM. Steven stated that he was glad to hear that the BoG was in support of bringing the fun back into the hobby. Roland concluded by suggesting that maybe in the code of conduct that we insert a pre-amble into sections 'B' and 'C' that just simply says what is expected in the terms of behavior from those two groups. David stated that there is a small amount of this in the user agreement and the code of conduct

where we point people to, and asked Roland if he thought more was necessary. Roland stated that if you look at section 'C' you could insert something there about what is expected and their job is to expedite the flow of traffic, to assist pilots etc. then you list the rules. David said this was not a bad idea, and asked if anyone wanted to work with Roland on this. Florian and Kyle volunteered to do this. David went onto explain that this will be a good change to the code of conduct as it will formalize the spirit of VATSIM and give us somewhere to point people when they break it. Florian also suggested the wording on the website with regard to ATC control should be reworded. We have to explain that we know that controlling can be very stressful and so on, but we are here for having fun and giving fun, this is our main mission. We should also look at giving the local vACC's a heads up and helping them to explain this to their trainees.

d) Voice Use When Cockpit Sharing

Norman started by saying previously with FS2004 we had FSNet available and then came FSX with shared cockpit and with both of these we were able to use Roger Wilco for voice. That is not available to be used anymore, the user can listen but they cannot transmit as the second pilot as they cannot lip connect to the network, the issue being they appear as a second near the other aircraft. Xplane has no option for this and FSInn there is a work around where the user connects as an observer, using a call sign similar to the first connection. Norman's question is we can either allow people to connect as an observer and use AVC along with their Flight Sim, or the easier option to allow a change within FSD to that the user can put in a call sign like the FSInn version very similar to the other pilot and FSD then checks to see if the other pilot is in the area and then does not display the blip. So the question to Mike first of all, is that a possibility and what do people think of it?

David had an update on coding from Wade, he is currently working a couple issues with FSD and we are updating FSD code. The number 1 thing he is attacking now is the upper winds problem and it appears he has a clear path to update FSD which will solve this problem. He is also looking at the issue of the shared connection and AVC and doing something like that. It is in the realm of technically possible and he is looking at how to implement it. This would be the ideal solution, going back to the ease of use for VATSIM members.

Norman stated that for AVC to work it would need to be changed; as the current checks it employs will not allow the connection. David agreed and said it maybe that Wade comes up with another solution but the end result is that we need to make it easy to use. We keep being beet up because things are too hard to use. Norman agreed stating that we do not want to go back to the Squawkbox 2.3 days

e) Local Rules

Roland started by reminding us that he had previously stated that in the second half of this year he was going to look at local rules. The backdrop to this is that local rules tend to get a little out of shape and gets outside umbrella of the spirit of VATSIM. We had previously discussed without going into great depth the possibility of having some sort of guideline. Local rules have to be local they have their own local flavor but there should be some sort of guideline that divisions and sub divisions can consult in terms of putting together their local rules and there ought to be a standard procedure for getting them signed off. Roland said he tried to put this in place 3 or 4 years ago but it has not happened, and that tells him that we need to formalize this a little more, without telling everyone what they can and cannot say.

Florian asked Roland if he had any idea how the EC would see this problem because as he remembers it a local entity is setting up local rules they are checked by the leading entity. Roland stated that the lowest level of authority recognized in VATSIM is Division Director so they would have to be at least

signed off by the Division Director, preferably counter signed by the Regional Director, but he still finds a lot of local jurisdictions that are putting in place what an individual thinks is a good idea without getting them properly checked against how it sits with VATSIM. Another area with this is just the way divisions are managed, the way that staff positions are filled. It is done quite differently across the board and there should be a standard way of doing things. In some cases when a Division Director resigns in some Divisions it is quite a monumental thing and there is almost a complete turnover of staff and really it should not be that way. One person resigns and it should be an open and transparent process to replace them, and then deal with the consequential.

David said that we were getting into specific things here, and the message that we as the BoG should be taking is that Roland has committed to start reviewing all of the local rules and try to identify where there are problems and if so work with the appropriate people to address them. We are not talking about local SOP's and things like that, we are talking about rules in terms of promotions and tests and hours in training. There have been vACC's with constitutions with language that was in violation of GRP because it pre dated GRP and they had not updated the constitution. He applauds the effort and said we all should do that, if we notice something when we are going around that violates the overriding VATSIM policy then we need to work with the appropriate people to get them to update their document.

Mike said from his point of view he does not think we need to implement more rules and regulations we need to hold the different levels accountable. We need to hold the people below us accountable for what they need to do, so if xyz vACC has a rule in violation why isn't their Regional Director or Divisional Director holding them accountable for it. If we did that consistently then we would not have as many problems as we do. David agreed that that was the first start and the key was identifying it and taking action with the right people, if we find something we notify the leader and get them in compliance, and a lot of them are, and in some cases they are not in compliance just simply because they do not know it. That rule has been forgotten, and it something that we need to take on for action. Mike continued by saying we need to make sure we do it through the proper chain of command so it does not look like we are sweeping in from the top, we need to go down to the RD, or DD and have them go down to their local leaders and staff. David agreed saying it does two things it decreases our workload and it creates the perception we are not doing that and supporting and empowering the EC.

Roland stated that the RD's should be doing this already and he should not have a job to do here but it's not getting done and he will certainly be working through the RD's and DD's but at the same time he will be looking to discuss with them some of the things that are causing concern, but we have to get them to make the changes and take ownership of it, and then we might be able to get them to keep going at it.

Other Business

Bill Alderson the new VP Supervisors joined the meeting – 1326z

David asked several BoG members to take care of some admin duties regarding the setup of facilities for Bill

a) Pilot Clients

David gave a quick update; at present we have two people working on pilot client development, for new clients. One is a Mac client, the other is another one for FSX. We also have continued development going one with XSquawkbox. Terry asked if in the State of the nation NOTAM can David, without being too specific, assure the members and alleviate their concerns over the perceived issues with pilot clients. David thinks this is a good point and he is going to contact the current guys developing the clients and see if they are comfortable with us releasing their name and even seeing if they have some sort of website or anything to start trying to build publicity for their effort. He acknowledges that if they do release their names they will get a lot of emails etc. but if we can say that Bob Jones is doing this that gives more credibility to the announcement. If not he will at least address the issue of here is what is going on. He hopes to get the NOTAM out in the next week to 10 days. Wade has hit the deck running

and is really running on this issue, and it is exactly why we need a VP of Development. Terry said with David's approval he will write back to the members who queried him about the pilot clients to say look out for an announcement to come shortly, without going into specifics. David agreed stating it gives them feedback on their concerns.

b) VATSIM – State of The Nation Notam

David stated that it was his plan to get it out a.s.a.p.; it is pretty much written he also wanted to talk about Wade and the new VP Sups in it. It will be coming out shortly, before he sends it out he will send it to the BoG mailing to let everyone take a look at it and a last chance for anyone to say I don't think you should say that or something like that.

c) New Division in VATASIA

Roland informed us of the VATPRC, Peoples Republic of China, which is separate from the Hong Kong vACC. This is mainland China, William has been working on this with Roland for some years, but it was held up by the political sensitivities of membership within the region. It is set to go ahead on July 1st; William has been writing to Mike because he needs database changes to create the division VATPRC and starting with a single vACC which is Sangria, the southern part of China. Roland will ask William to write to Mike again to spell out what he needs. Roland asked Mike if he was able to get that in place by July 1st. Mike said he does not want to put it in before the 1st of July because he cannot postdate when people can start selecting the vACC. Roland said that was ok and he would make sure Mike had the details in a suitable timeframe. Roland stated that they had a little contact with Steven about the publicity and they will work with Steven to get the front page announcements organized.

David said expanding into China is huge for us, there are a billion Chinese people out there. It is somewhere that has not been penetrated very much in the flight sim world obviously the restrictions of the Chinese government had some part on it. We need to have big publicity on this, it needs to be on the website, it needs to be talked about and he really commends everyone who has worked on it. Jim said now it is official he can give them cert access before or after July 1st, whatever they want to do, if they put together a list of who the staff members are going to be he can go ahead and move forward with that now. Norman asked for the names of the DCRM and RCRP members, Roland said he would make sure the relevant people make contact with Norman.

New Business not on agenda.

Terry asked Florian to update us on the world charts system offered by Alan Jenkins. The chart software is hosted on Alan's home server, and the link is not always working. Florian is working on getting a solution or maybe we can switch the software over to the VATSIM server. It is not a long term solution as it is a real problem to get a good links manager. If the local vACC's are not giving their charts then it is just the standard real world charts and this is not the best way to do get the other communities on it. He is also talking to VATEUD who has implemented a different chart notification service, using a MySQL system. Jeppesen Germany has agreed to let the German vACC publish their outdated VFR charts, maybe it is an idea for the EC to contact their local Jeppesen to ask for their support and so forth.

Steven stated that he had sent out a request for information from BoG members and Founders to go into a 6 monthly wrap up of VATSIM activities and major events. No one had responded except for Florian who has offered to proof the document and help with layout. Several members stated they have not received the request and asked Steven to resent the email. It is hoped that the newsletter will go out to the community by the end of the month.

Executive Session at 13:47z.

Executive session ends 13:51z

Florian said he will be giving us a roundup of numbers for the website and server at the next meeting. He has removed the login for VATSIM.net, it was no longer need and if we see anything not working please let him know. Every 4 weeks he will be doing a re-indexing of the website; this will put the website down for an hour or 2. David asked Florian to add the meeting minutes to the drop down menu.

Adjournment

David Klain called to adjourn the meeting, seconded by **Florian Harms**. Meeting adjourned at **13:55z**. The next meeting date is to be advised.

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

Minutes approved by: **BoG vote**