VATSIM Board of Governors'

Meeting Minutes
26TH March, 2011

Agenda

Old Business
General Discussion on carried over business

New Business
• VP Regions – Job Description – Open Discussion
• Report from EC – Terry/Dave
• Network and Developments – Luca and Wade
• Forum Business – Steven

Other Business

Call to order
Terry Scanlan called to order the regular meeting of the VATSIM Board of Governors' at 21:08z on 26th March, 2011 online via TeamSpeak.

Register
Terry called the register. The following persons were present:

Florian Harms (FH)
Jeff Turner (JU)
Kyle Ramsey (RS) joined at 21:15z
Luca Benelli (LB):
Steven Cullen (SC)
Terry Scanlan (TS)
Roger Curtiss (RC)

Apologies:
David Klain (DK)
Wade Williams (WW)
Jim Johnson (JJ)
Norman Blackburn (NB)

Steven holds Norman's proxy.
Terry holds proxy for David and Jim
Luca has Wade's proxy

Total votes available – 11

Approval of minutes from last meeting
Previous minutes not tabled. – Approved by BoG vote and distributed 20th January, 2011

Prior to the addressing the agenda items of the meeting Terry made a speech of thanks and recognition, acknowledging the resignations of both Roland Collins and Mike Evans. It was recognized that both Roland and Mike had provided an excellent service over the years, giving all they could for their roles. All members of the BoG gave their thanks and appreciation to their former colleagues.

The Board of Governors welcomes Roger Curtiss to the Board as the VP Virtual Airlines and Special Ops, we congratulate Roger on his appointment and we are looking forward to working with Roger.

<u>Old Business</u>
General Discussion on carried over business

TS started discussions by stating he was disappointed we had not been able to close off the outstanding issues. TS stated that his work on member recognition has stalled because of his inability to grab data from the server to produce benchmarks for pilot and ATC recognition. FH said that he set up some graphics/ideas for use in the recognition "awards", once completed FH will send these to the BoG issues forum.

LB updated us on his progress with the servers, stating that he would only move forward on updates (SAS) if he was confident that he would not cause other issues.

TS reiterated that each of us need to visit the BoG issues forum, all outstanding business has timelines for completion, he will go back and revisit those and reset the timeline to have them all completed before the next meeting.

<u>New Business</u>

a) <u>VP Regions – Job Description – Open Discussion</u>

TS stated that this would need a new job description detail more than the current description. TS has had some communications with Founders as to the need to really spell out what we are looking for in the role of VP – Regions. We need to address this as quickly as possible.

KR asked if the Founders had any other additional requirements for us to look for, other requirements that they required for this job. TS stated that he had in fact invited some of the Founders to be part of the selection process, but they declined stating they wanted it to be solely a BoG process and appointment, they trust and respect the BoG and know the right candidate will be selected.

TS invited further discussions via the email list after the meeting.

b) <u>Report from EC – Terry/Dave</u>

TS stated that the BoG should get a report each quarter from the EC, which would come via the VP Regions. The report was forwarded to BoG members via the BoG email list. A couple of important things that come out of the report are the C3 rating in the GRP. The feeling of the EC is the C3 should be looked at and discussed with several options at hand:
   i) Leave C3 in its current form
   ii) Make C3 a control rating once again (could require realignment of ratings?)
   iii) Make C3 an administrative rating that can be taken away when administrative responsibilities terminate
   iv) Remove the C3 rating in its entirety.

FH made comment that as VATSIM is an educational and learning environment that the C3 could be a rating of achievement of the highest standard. Set the exam as hard as required to demonstrate this.

KR responded that his position on this matter is it is completely in the EC's control and is delighted that they are even considering these items. TS agreed with KR offering BoG support and guidance. TS stated that his personal view was the C3 should be made available to the divisions to set their own benchmark as to where the C3 should be, at the moment the C3 does not mean as much as some people have been given the C3 for work with training and such. TS said the BoG will go back to the EC and make our comments known, but it will not be a directive.

LB made comment about his thoughts on the C3 but these and TS response were lost due to poor audio quality.

The next time from the EC list was 2)   Allowing rated controllers to "self-train" on higher positions, i.e. a S1 could train on Approach without an Instructor/Mentor under various stipulations. TS related his response to his activities in training in his home division (VATPAC). He finds that the scenarios created for tower and approach control are intense, and sometimes stressful, with traffic building as the session progresses, giving them the experience they need to do the duties of the controller, but there is a feeling in the community that not many want to use simulators to train simulator controllers. That's why they want S1 to handle tower, S2 to handle approach and S3 to handle control under certain circumstances. Personally TS is in favor of this as it would allow to expedite the members training. Other comments were lost due to audio quality. LB asked if under certain circumstances would it be easier to promote members to the higher rating. TS asked what would happen if the promotion could not be achieved, as we cannot downgrade a controller. FH stated that he was not convinced it could work. RC asked who was objecting to the simulators or had a problem with them. TS responded that between 50 and 80 percent of divisions did not like it. RC stated that this could be laziness, running into issues, not knowing how to use the system fully. TS said that it does get down to someone needs to be able to set the scenarios and related to how he uses different scenarios he has set. SC stated that he can see the points of views being expressed but thinks this situation would create more issues than it solves. KR stated that he thinks that this is an issue for the EC, that the BoG keeps getting caught up in the little details, when we should be ensuring that there is an even playing field across the world. Is an S3 that controls as an S3 in Manchester the same as an S3 that controls in Michigan, and they should be. An S3 should an S3 anywhere, it should not matter where they trained, an S3 should be able to come to an area and with a little training on local procedure be able to pass the exam and control. KS related this to a C1 rated member moving into a North American facility and issues arising over his suitability to control. TS stated this relates to looking at the local rules for each vACC and divisions which is a difficult and ongoing task. JU agreed with KR's assessment of the issues. LB stated that he was not going to modify code at this point, at which TS also reminded us of the fact that students cannot log into positions higher than their rating. Further comments from LB and FH regarding this issue relating to major airport status were lost due to poor audio quality.

DUE TO AUDIO ISSUES THE MEETING WAS MOVED TO A NEW TEAMSPEAK SERVER

Point 3 of the EC letter refers to the training of OBS-rated Controllers, stating that Several Regions/Divisions are not satisfied with the requirement that all initial training prior to the S1 rating needs to be conducted offline. It puts students' offline; it puts Instructors/Mentors offline, and does absolutely nothing with regards to providing services to pilots on the network. It seems silly that we should be taking people offline, to "simulate a simulation", instead of encouraging them to get online, and actually provide services to pilots on the network, even if minor mistakes are to be done online on the way to achieving the competency. Many Divisions are lacking the technical know-how or resources to create the offline training scenarios. We realize this might require a change in the ratings structure, and accordingly the ease of which Supervisors are able to keep track of non-certified members. It could also just be as simple as allowing OBS to connect as GND/TWR.

TS stated straight out that he cannot seeing this happening due to the requirements to make changes in cert for it to happen. TS continued saying that where the issue was a lack of technical know-how, the EC should give them this know-how, the scenarios to use in Tower Trainer as it is an effective tool, that is currently underutilized. SC asked why it was so hard to get the members online; saying that if the member can connect

the client, give a satisfactory clearance, departure or arrival instruction what's the problem, give them the rating and get them into the game. KR and several others agreed. FH responded by saying that many of the areas think their airspace is very complex and with the ground positions if you don't start your training at somewhere like Heathrow, Atlanta or Charlotte that's fine. If the systems are becoming more and more complicated then it becomes a more complicated task, and here the local protection of the local vACC is not completely wrong, and you encounter different situations in different regions, like Australia and the UK for example. KR stated that he is in alignment with this, and once again they are trying to avoid issues by supporting these training schemes instead of getting online having fun and enjoying themselves. LB stated it looks like the 3rd time we talked about the same things.

KR put it to the BoG that we take it back to the EC that they are looking to be told what to do; instead of doing what they know is the right thing to do. They are ineffective in the processes, they are ineffective in their ability to lead, and he is not sure what is it going to take to get them to do that, and go forth with a really strong outlook and can lead through the processes and get them to make the decisions and get them to take the ownership., and because the EC is week, it allows the Divisions to run rough shot and do whatever they want. RC suggested a possible remedy to this is to give them a remedy they do not want, give them an excessive direction and let them come back and say we want to do this ourselves. KR stated that RC might think this would work, but that is what happened in GRP and to a small extent in GRP2 with the BoG taking a far more active role then they wanted to and they lead them through the process and then they blamed the BoG for the way that the GRP is, yet is their product. TS agreed that there has been a lack of leadership in the EC, but things are changing.

Point four 4 was the ability to track training through CERT. TS stated that we do not have the ability to look at this until we get somebody in to fill the position vacated by Mike. The BoG acknowledges this request, and it will be looked at when we have the role filled.

Point five; Better searching/listing of Active/Inactive members (last online) in CERT. is limited by the same restrictions as mentioned in the previous point.

Point six: Supervisor System
      a.   Not all members of EC are able to access the system appropriately
      b.   Broken applications remain in the "dashboard" and are unable to be deleted
      c.   Emails regarding new applications are sometimes/often lost and never reach intended recipients
      d.   Members are allowed to apply even though they do not meet the minimum requirements
            i.   Such applications are NOT being filtered before reaching us.
            ii.   Applications that do not meet the minimum requirements should be automatically rejected, and the member should be notified of the reason for such a rejection.
      e.   There should be a set time limit in which rejected applicants are not allowed to re-apply for consideration. Some people apply over and over and over again even though their application has been denied and rejected.

LB stated that he cannot guarantee he will be able to upgrade the system, but he will have a look at it.

JU commented that no one has asked him since he was elected about accessing the system appropriately. He does not have one (1) email from any member of the EC stating they have an issue with access. He invites anyone who needs access or has issues with access to contact him, and once the upgrade is made he can look into that. He also invited emails advising what applications have been reaching them without meeting the minimum requirements. Anthony (SAS author) has offered to complete the upgrade in Mike absence, but he does not have the required FTP access. LB and JU to discuss further.

Point Seven; GRP Review

TS stated that they are talking about completing a review and we will wait and see what comes out of that.

TS has undertaken to respond to the EC regarding these issues, with instructions where appropriate, not what we can do, but what they should be looking at.

c) Network and Developments – Luca and Wade

WW has given his information to LB for reporting. TS stated that DK was particularly interested in updates regarding the various clients. LB commented that WW is only aware of one developer who is still currently actively developing; the others have appeared to dissolve. WW stated that the Upper Winds project has stalled but the guess for completion is three (3) months.   This is almost everything for development. As for the network, there are now around 15 voice servers, most have been updated correctly. A new FSD server is scheduled for installation in the UK which should take some load off C-2. LB continued saying it appears they have found the cause of problems with ATC being disconnected during larger events, and hopes to have a patch on the server shortly. It appears recent issues have been due to members failing to read and follow LB's forum post. FH stated that he did not have any disconnections while controlling in the CTP event.

TS moved for the meeting to enter executive session, motion seconded by FH; Executive session entered at 22:19z. Executive session ended 22:23z

d) Forum Business – Steven

SC acknowledged that with Mike's resignation that there maybe not a lot that can be done with this issue in the short term.   SC stated that he was getting an increase in the number of complaints regarding the forum response times, and how slow they were and how it appears they are not responding at times. This was also reported for the main website being slow to load at times. The initial proposal was going to be to approach Mike to see if a change of server would improve the situation. LB responded that as far as the forums are concerned there are a couple of scripts that run which could cause the slowdown. LB has made changes in the last 4 days to limit this occurrence as much as possible. FH reported that he is currently running the webserver cleanup every 5 to 6 days. Unfortunately the CMS content does cost a little bit of speed, with other causes not directly under his influence. SC thanked FH for his explanation, and the continued work in improving and maintaining the CMS system. One of the main points of brining this topic to the meeting was to make the board aware that emails have been received regarding the access, and to see what solutions were available. FH agreed that this can be a real problem, and can depend on things such as internet connection speeds etc. LB asked if SC had received any recent emails in the last week or so, as far as he can see the forum has behaved quite well for the last 4 to 5 days. SC stated that he had not seen any new emails on the subject since sending the agenda item request to TS. LB continued that it may not be the final solution, but it should work well for some time. TS added that sometimes the browsers members use can affect the load times, i.e. Firefox will load faster than Internet Explorer. FH agreed it can depend on the browser, but there are a lot of things that can happen to slow down the browser.

Other Business

a) Discussion on changing SUP minimum online time stipulations in the SUP CoC.

JU stated that he has not had time to completely digest the issues raised by Paul in his email to the Board and he would like to bring this back to the next meeting. JU did state he would like to address another aspect within the Supervisors CoC. He continued saying back in November 2010 we talked about duplicate connections for Supervisors. Currently the Supervisor CoC says they must maintain an online presence for 20 hours per month with at least 5 hours as a primary supervisor. We decided on a 90 day trial, that time is now up, and JU asked that we make this a permanent option, were Supervisors can have a duplicate connection. TS asked what the general feeling of the supervisors was, did they accept it. JU stated he had asked for feedback, which we can see in the Supervisor forums, to-date he has not received any negative feedback. TS gave a summary of the proposal to enable RC to become familiar with the trial. TS concluded that it has worked well, and stated that it

was a good suggestion. FH seconded TS conclusion stating it is an absolute benefit for "those guys" doing the work for the members.

b) The use of Team Viewer for VATSIM (FSInn) Support.

Ernesto asked if he could use Team Viewer to support members with software issues, namely in the FSInn support forum. TS put this to the meeting, stating that he was in favor of the idea and asked for other comments or objections to using Team Viewer. FH stated that he sees it as a vital system to help somebody, the system is quite stable and safe, and he fully agrees with the idea. LB stated that we should be quite clear on who is being let in, support requests should be done through the forum, with only the session password passed by private message, so we can keep an eye on it if we need to.

c) Flights over sensitive areas

Brian Pryor has mentioned with recent troubles there has been a spate of flights over sensitive areas such as Libya he has suggested that we add a rule to Code of Conduct or Code of Regulations governing flights in these sensitive areas. TS stated that he did not think we had anything in the CoC/CoR covering this that these flights always pop up when trouble occurs, they last a few weeks and people get tired of them.

TS mentioned charity flights, with one member wanting to do a VATSIM wide charity flight into Japan following the floods and earthquakes bringing supplies into Tokyo from Europe. This is not the same as flying over places like Libya.

KR stated that in instances like Libya, anything that involves military type aircraft is already covered by the VSOA rules, and all the registered VSOA's already know to stay away from Libya and similar places whilst they are "hot". With regard to point to point flights that go over these areas, if they are not military, if they are not doing anything silly, then there are already regulations and rules in place. TS stated that he thought Brian's comments were aimed at VFR flights in the sensitive areas, not military. KR stated that he had seen some of these types of flights, and mentioned that in the real world VFR flights have never been allowed in Libya, and so at the moment it would be appropriate to ask members not to fly VFR there currently. KR reiterated that the VOSA rules cover the VFR Tornado at 700 kts over sensitive airspace. FH suggested that military flights post flight plans even if it just lists aircraft types, to avoid issues, and that no military flights should be operating in the no fly zone.

TS stated that the difficulty with charity flights is with the tracking of donations/money. When he approves charity events he is always very firm about the organizer not collecting the money, it is donated directly to the charity, and the charity must give its' permission for the event to proceed. He suggest one possible solution is a centrally controlled VATSIM PayPal account were one person from VATSIM controls the account, and donations are made to it. This person then deposits the money with the charity and reports back that $xx.xx was raised in support. TS quickly acknowledged the many issues that would arise from situation.

TS moved for the meeting to enter executive session, motion seconded by LB; Executive session entered at 22:50z. Executive session ended 23:07z

Adjournment

Terry Scanlan adjourned the meeting at **23:08z**. The next meeting date is to be advised.

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

Minutes approved by: **BoG vote**