VATSIM Board of Governors
Q4 2014 Meeting Minutes
Jan 24, 2015 2000z

Open Meeting, Record Attendance and Proxies

Opening Business

- Open meeting, welcome new members, record ad hoc votes since last meeting - Steven 2000z-2010z

- Review Pilot Training Department - Kyle for Pan 2010z-2025z

- Training automation opportunities - Steven 2025z-2040z

- Web and server issues and updates - Kieran and Luca 2040z-2055z

- VSOA Regulations enforcement - Roger and Gunnar 2055z-2110z

- PDC Project discussion - Justin 2110z-2125z

- Introduction of Supervisor Operations Manual - Gunnar 2125-2140

- Questions from Members - All 2140z-2155z

- Close meeting - Steven 2155z

Attendees:

> Steven Cullen (SC)
>
> Peter Nielsen (PN)
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> Kyle Ramsey (KR)
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> Roger Curtiss (RC)
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> Luca Benelli (LB)
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> Justin Friedland (JF)
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> Gunnar Lindahl (GL)
>
> Kieran Hardern (KH)
>
> Daniel Gomes (DG)

Apologies: Norman Blackburn (NB)

Minutes:

The meeting was called to order at 2002z by SC

SC welcomed both KH and DG to their first meeting and as new members of the Board of Governors.

KR announced updates to the Code of Regulations have been made, a vote will be forthcoming in the next few weeks. Thanks to KH for pushing them through.

KR recorded there were two BoG votes since the Quarter 3 2014 BoG meeting:

- Minutes for the Q3 2014 BoG meeting were approved unanimously

- SC was unanimously elected to a second two year term as VATSIM President

- Daniel Gomes was elected to serve as VP Membership

Review Pilot Training Department – KR

- Due to his personal circumstances, Pan Lalas is no longer able to continue as VP Pilot Training. The BoG will post the opening of applications for VP of Pilot Training (VATGOV14) in the next few weeks. We are extremely grateful to Pan for his vision and leadership in developing the Pilot Training program well beyond expectation and we recognize how hard it will be to replace him.

- In the interim, John Weisenfeld has been leading the Pilot Training Department with the help of several others. They all remain committed to Pan's vision. KR sent a written report from John to the Board of Governors email list prior to the meeting.

- The Pilot Training Academy has commenced the training of the P9 Pilot Rating.

- Given the overload of the Europe Division's (VATEUD) Pilot Training program, it is suggested that the Pilot Training Academy is ideal to offload their P1 course. The P1 is easily available can be completed in a few hours with the only human interaction being to issue the rating. We are positioning this training into the path of new members to encourage them to start with a P1 Pilot Rating.

- KH pointed out that utilizing the term 'CFI' for P9s will cause confusion given the head of existing ATOs is also termed 'CFI' and asked that this be addressed.

  - KR agrees we need to make sure the VATSIM difference is understood. The ATO version is a Chief Flight Instructor while the P9 version is a Certified Flight Instructor. KH further highlighted the usage and meaning of the terms 'CFI' in different parts of the world.

  - KH suggests aligning the callsign suffix with the actual P9 rating name.

  - KR will pass the suggestion on to the Pilot Training team.

- KR asked for volunteers to join the selection committee for the new VP Pilot Training.

- After discussion it was agreed that John Weisenfeld should be offered to join the selection committee since he has stated he is not interested in submitting an application

- LB recommends successful candidate should have a reasonable knowledge of the web systems that run the Pilot Training Department and a member of the selection committee should have good knowledge of those requirements.

Training automation opportunities – SC

- This is an exploratory topic mostly to get people thinking about possible opportunities and problems regarding training for new members and consider the possibilities to increase retention. The idea is to try to get everyone that registers to have a good chance of receiving quick training and therefore staying with the network and conversely to help those who are just looking but no real long term interest to find their way to the next opportunity that may be more appealing to their tastes. This idea comes from watching the growth of the Pilot Academy and its current P1 offering which to the user is fully automated, short, and achievable.

- The very vague idea to begin the discussion is, could a global S1 rating be offered similar to how the P1 is currently delivered and deliver to the local facility a candidate who has already shown enough interest to get that far (a few hours)? These people would be more likely to remain interested and also arrive at their local facility with more knowledge about what to expect next.

- Some of the features of such a system were suggested by SC and KR:

  ○ Scalability – the volume would be hundreds per month. The current Pilot Training Academy should be able to handle several hundred per month but it is untested.

  ○ Languages – new member should be able to start VATSIM presented with an option of a language they are most familiar with. This doesn't change VATSIM's position on English as the primary language, just an attempt to meet and introduce new members to VATSIM in the most comfortable way possible. The platform the Pilot Training Academy uses can present materials in up to 90 languages.

- PN question – we estimate 90% sign up and never do anything else. How do we make sure they get the training for their area?

- KR – while the current P1 is completely global it is compliant with the P1 requirements worldwide. However we are talking storage space so nothing prevents this from presenting an S1 program at a region, division, or local level through this global system. The global system ensures all programs adhere to the GRP.

- PN is concerned about taking the human element completely out of the process. It would perhaps act as a filter for people who are serious enough to invest some time from those who aren't. KR suggests could also become a barrier for duplicate account creators if they had to go through the training each time to continue their violation.

- LB expresses concern at how long it would take to implement such a program; PN agrees and may not speed up the process while he sees some value in member retention. LB asks about a vACC to be the test bed for such a product? PN asks about a random sample of incoming members and see which are more successful and the time it takes them to achieve S1.

- GL asks how many ATC training systems are already doing something similar? PN says there are, in various forms.

- GL and KH expressed their concern over the proposal and questioned whether it would be practical or of benefit.

- LB suggests we will need to move this discussion to a better format in the interest of time. SC commits he and KR will prepare a document to lay out a proposal and consider the suggestions so far in this conversation to kick off our discussion.

Web and server issues and updates – KH/LB

- The main website was replaced in December, replacing the old website launched in 2010. Thanks to Roy De Vos Burchart and Mark Richards especially, but also the remainder of the team who contributed to the site. KH thanked Florian Harms for supporting the website for the previous 4 years.

- RC asks about the ability to make edits by comparison to the old site. KH says it is much simpler and self-explanatory. KR affirms, as did SC, saying one of his regular tasks has gone from 20 to 4 minutes.

- We are in the process of adding pilot ratings into the data feed. This is ongoing with help from Roland Winklmeier.

- There is an ongoing project to improve CERT being developed by KH. Focus is to make sure we keep accurate and appropriate records of everything we do.

- VFMU out to the EC, an external global booking system, KH is just ensuring integration with existing infrastructure; the project is being developed externally with the intention of launching worldwide.

Executive session at 2058z until 2106z

VSOA Regulations enforcement – RC/GL

- RC asked GL about clarity of the allowed activities on VATSIM by pilots performing protected (Special Operations) activities. GL suggests old policy is clear but the enforcement varies substantially.

- The recent suggestion is that military flying of all kinds should be restricted upon VATSIM, not simply limited by activity, including proposed wording of new guidelines.

- SC asks why circuits in an F-16 should be restricted. LB likes to fly a Tornado in his area and wonders if he will be able to any-more? RC answers doing circuits or point to point flights have been OK under the current policy. The focus in the current policy is on the activity, not the airframe. KR says his read of the current wording is that a Tornado flying around without a military callsign would in no way be in violation. RC to revise some wording to clarify the intent to give supervisors clear guidance on what to enforce, but that restricting all military-type flights would not be the way forward.

- Conversation around how to link these, and other less formal documents, to more official standing to ensure these policies are visible to all members.

PDC Project discussion – JF

- In the same spirit of getting new controllers on line and participating, PDC (Pre Departure Clearance) automates the clearance delivery process and gives even the beginning controller a sophisticated but easy way to deliver validated clearances and getting them into the sky. It reduces the wait time for clearances which is a common issue in event feedback. Many locations employ PDC systems, JF highlighted ZNY's new web-based system that has recently

been very well received.

- SC endorses the idea and has personal experience of him~~self~~ and other pilots he knows who have used it.

- JF reminded of a proposal sent around the email list relating to expanding a ZNY-style system for more general use

- KH is concerned a system like ZNY's will not scale globally for a variety of reasons. JF agrees this may not be the exact platform and even thinks the developers of this program are more interested in VATSIM adopting the concept globally than pushing their design itself.

- JF reminds to go read the document he sent a few weeks back with details about the system and if you have questions or ideas we can discuss this.

- KH and LB explain that recent discussion has been taking place following that initial proposal, considering how, theoretically, a network-wide ACARS/PDC system might be achieved,

Executive session at 2136z until 2142z

- KH asks for the board's view of having a global PDC system. GL says it should be used in places where it adds value but not forced in places that don't want it. PN is concerned about the priority of this project compared to other needs. SC reiterates we entrust priority choices with LB and KH to best understand what they should work on; the question is do we support this idea enough to ask them to consider it?

Executive session at 2149z until 2151z

Introduction of Supervisor Operations Manual – GL

- GL sent draft document out to the board and expressed his thanks for the feedback received so far. He will work with the author in light of the feedback and we will resubmit to the Board soon. GL asks if the concept of this manual as a replacement to the Supervisor Code of Conduct raises any objections from the ~~Board?~~Board.

- SC suggests the language of the document seems 'governmental' in tone and wondered if a more 'civilian' approach would increase the commitment of the reader.

- The board would like to thank the author of the document, Callum McLoughlin, for his continued contributions.

Marketing Update – JF

- PC Pilot magazine continues to feature VATSIM and we continue to grow that relationship.

- Boston Virtual ATC is sponsoring a conference in Hartfort, Connecticut and we have been invited. IVAO will also be there with some FS vendors, held at the Mid Atlantic Air Museum, a great location.

  ○ SC stated we have been invited before and asks our past position. We haven't really objected to participation as long as our guidelines around money and minors are followed. If local members and staff wish to exhibit at the event then we would offer our support.

  ○ The Board asks JF to discuss with Don Desfosse (VATUSA Division Director) to explore whether there is any interest.

- SC calls for a vote; KR asks for objections; none noted, SC asks to be kept in the loop by email along with KR.

Questions from Members and other business – SC

- Can we have a dedicated channel on VATSIM for the streaming of music?

  - The Board's position is that VATSIM's core focus is on the education and enjoyment of flying and ATC. Music is currently provided free of charge to pilots by several third parties, some of whom are great friends of VATSIM We recommend members would benefit more from utilizing these external services.

Executive session at 2209z until 2217z

- PN asks DG how his start up is going and if he needs any help. DG is looking for a new ticket system to replace our aging one. Filtering for dupe accounts working with KH is an important goal for us in the short term.

- PN asks if we still require people to declare their language as a part of their record. After discussion it was apparent there is no current usage of this information in our systems.

  - Motion to remove primary language field from our signup process was passed by acclamation.

- RC left meeting at 2226z

Executive Session at 2231z until 2237z

Meeting adjourned at 2237z by motion by KR, seconded by SC, none opposed