

Quarterly Meeting of the VATSIM Board of Governors held on Saturday April 17th 2021.

Meeting called to order at 2005Z

Present:

Gunnar Lindahl (GL)	President
Richard Jenkins (RJ)	Founder
Tim Barber (TB)	Vice President, Operations
Simon Irvine (SI)	Vice President, Europe, Middle East and Africa
Ananstasios Stefopoulos (AS)	Vice President, Asia Pacific
Matthew Cianfarani (MC)	Vice President, Network Infrastructure
Matt Bozwood-Davies (MBD)	Vice President, Technical Development
Nicola Felini (NF)	Vice President, Conflict Resolution
Don Desfosse (DD)	Vice President, Membership
Roger Curtiss (RC)	Vice President, Virtual Airlines and Special Operations
Matt Bartels (MB)	Vice President, Marketing and Communications

Regrets: Federico Navarro (FN) Vice President, Americas
(Proxy to NF)

GL welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Ad Hoc votes

Adhoc votes since the last meeting were recorded by TB, namely:

On February 7th, 2021, it was moved "*That the Iron Mic competition be re-established, moving to a monthly competition.*" The motion **carried** with 13 Yes votes, 0 No votes and 0 Abstentions.

On February 10th, 2021, it was moved "*To remove SquawkBox and FSInn from the Approved Pilot Clients list. To remove SquawkBox and FSInn from the Approved Voice Software list. The effective date for this is the 31st of March 2021 and will precede by a period of at least 14 days public notice via Communication Channels.*" The motion **carried** with 13 Yes votes, 0 No votes, and 0 Abstentions

On March 18th, 2021, it was moved "*To approve minutes BOG_2020-Q4 and publish*" The motion **carried** with 10 Yes votes, 0 No votes, and 1 Abstentions

On March 30th, 2021, it was moved "*To propose that Caucasus FSS (RU-SC_FSS) which covers the Rostov FIR of Russia - URRR, and three Caucasus countries - Georgia UGGG FIR, Armenia - UDDD FIR and Azerbaijan - UBBA FIR is made permanent*" The motion **carried** with 9 Yes votes, 0 No votes, and 1 Abstentions

Election for the position of Vice President, Operations:

On March 21st, 2021, Tim Barber was elected to the position of Vice President, Operations.

Since the last meeting, GL received the resignation of Ethan Hawes, Vice President, Pilot Training. GL formally thanked Ethan for the tremendous work he did in the Pilot Training portfolio and expressed his hopes to find someone equally passionate for the position. With TB moving from Supervisors to Operations, there are two vacancies on the VATSIM Board of Governors to be filled. TB has posted the jobs openings to forums and socials with the assistance of MB, and interview panels have been set up.

Old Business

1. Future of Iron Mic – With the passing of the motion to re-establish Iron Mic, TB reported that he will work on getting this back up and running. With changes to the network's stats system, he will coordinate with the tech people to set up a way of accurate measurement.

Action Item: TB to report back at the next BoG Meeting

2. Pilot Accountability – Prior to departing the BoG, Ethan Hawes distributed his final report from the Pilot Accountability Group. TB recommended that this report be forwarded to the new Vice President, Pilot Training upon their election, for future action. GL discussed a portion of the report that referred to application of the VATSIM Code of Conduct to pilot skill/accountability. MB asked if there were any statistics on this. TB reported that when a WALLOP is received in this regard, supervisors are trained to assist pilots who need help, and rarely if ever does it get to the point of having to enforce CoC. Notable exceptions are deliberate trolling, or members who do not understand the true nature of the network (simulation vs. arcade game). NF reported that only two such cases have made it to the CRM process, one a deliberate trolling incident, and the other for a yet indeterminate reason.

Action Item: New VPPLT to review after election and report to BoG on implementation strategy.

3. Strategic Direction – TB requested to defer to the next meeting as he was unable to make meaningful progress on this project due to real-world obligations and the workload of carrying two portfolios

Action Item: TB to report back at the next BoG Meeting

4. Multiple Frequency Top-Down / AIP – MB reported that the project started off well, but as it has continued, there has been difficulty in getting the divisions to buy into the project globally and to provide the requested information required to complete the project. There has been great support in VATUSA for example, but less so in other areas such as Europe. MB asked for assistance from the RVPs and SI said he would talk to the VATUK Division Director to get some assistance there. MB is going to work with Matan to fix some issues with the website and send an email out to the senior ring seeking their buy-in and commitment to provide the information required. Planning for release in Q2 2021.

Action Items: SI to talk to Chris Pawley – all RVPs to assist as required, MB to send email to senior ring and report back at the next BoG Meeting

5. Update to Code of Regulations and User Agreement – The proposed changes to the UA have been distributed by NF for review. RJ sent it to George Maranakis and it is currently under legal review. NF has identified changes to the CoR that need to be made and solicited the BoG for any other changes they feel should be considered. GL and NF identified a few areas that they would like to see amended, e.g., the names of the current VPs should be removed to reduce the number of edits required, and the role and decision-making functions of the RCRP were discussed.

**Action Item: All VPs forward CoR amendment suggestions to NF.
NF to circulate draft upon completion. GL to follow up with RJ re: UA**

New Business

1. ATIS Policy Information – MBD reported that network costs associated with ATIS Text-to-Speech have increased significantly (100\$ increase) this year due to controllers including far more operational and non-simulated information in ATIS messages than they have in the past. It was proposed that RVPs be tasked with communicating the importance of enforcing the Air Traffic Control and Information Management Policy as it relates to creating ATIS messages (Section 5.2.2), specifically asking them to not include information that cannot be simulated. Examples are advisories around bird activity, runway conditions/closures etc. The entire BoG discussed the item, and the consensus reached was that there was more benefit in allowing controllers to simulate the real world ATIS messages in the real world. RJ reviewed budgetary items with the BoG and while he did not have any specific concerns about allowing the ATIS messages to reflect real world messaging, he did remind everyone that all decisions that affect the cost of running the network should be vetted thoroughly prior to approval. DD suggested that we could seek balance by communicating to the members that we support realism in ATIS messages, but that it is also a cost driver for the network. We should seek their assistance and cooperation in reducing non-simulation messages and unnecessary expenses as much as possible and illustrate this by giving examples. The BoG felt this was a fair approach. MBD suggested that policy should be amended to reflect practice.

**Action Item: MBD, TB and DD to create some messaging. BoG to approve,
then RVPs to distribute**

2. Membership Department Items – DD led the BoG in an extensive discussion around challenges currently facing the Membership Department. The topics presented were Identities on VATSIM, GDPR, and Organizational Accounts.

Identities on VATSIM – Historically, VATSIM has required the use of real names. Historically, the purpose of this was to protect both the members and the network itself. Some of the modern challenges we are facing include parents who mandate that their children use fake names online, significant pockets of interest in using fake names to protect privacy – some culturally based, and requests from LGBTQ+ members. In general, the network needs to determine what we want to be in this evolving world – more of a modern gaming environment that does not care about public facing identity vs. a community that values realism and accountability. NF, MB, and RC provided their opinions on the requirements to require real names from our member. MC provided an example of identity requirements from another organization that he is a member of, specifically that positive identification is required once a member obtains a specific set of

roles i.e., staff member, mentor etc. RJ reminded everyone that VATSIM is more akin to an educational institution than to a gaming network, and as such positive identification is important. He liked the example provided by MC as it related to positive identification. MC clarified that positive identification is to the organization, and that a member could still choose how they want to be identified to the public. TB suggested that in modern times 13 years of age may be too young to be a member of VATSIM. This topic was discussed with the main thoughts around issues of liability. NF to look at LexisNexis for case law. GL tabled further discussion on minimum age to a later date.

DD and MBD have been researching schemes and technology for a “true name at registration” but using a preferred name online. A concept of operations is required to determine what an acceptable preferred name would be. The BoG discussed different ideas and opinions around what an acceptable preferred name would look like.

Action Item: DD will mature this topic and bring it back to discuss at the next BoG meeting

DD reported that there are an increasing number of requests for name changes from the LGBTQ+ community. Members often state that it is hard to get formal name changes, but they are keen to change their name on VATSIM and other social environments. The membership department has recently expanded the list of acceptable documentation to give more flexibility for name changes, which includes items such as utility bills, library cards, and bus passes as examples. Some questions that were discussed include should the network accept social media identities, or just take members at their word? What is the risk to the network if an “bad actor” uses a name change policy to cause harm to members? RJ indicated that he strongly supports allowing members to change their name without requiring government-based documents.

Action Item: DD will continually evaluate the documentation requirements for name change requests, and continue with policy of accepting non-government based documents.

The meeting went into executive session at 2145Z.

The meeting came out of executive session at 2153Z.

GDPR Efficiency – DD reported that there has been a marked increase in GDPR requests. It is a significantly labour intensive process. Membership has worked collaboratively with Tech Dev to create a “one-button” erasure facility.

Action Item: DD to develop a concept of operations to ensure a closed loop for GDPR requests including a process through which VP Membership can review requests and adjudicate if any security information should be retained on a case-by-case basis.

Organizational Accounts – The network received a few requests each year to allow for organizational accounts. They generally fall into one of three categories: nonprofit, military, and for-profit ventures. Further discussion was tabled to a further date.

The meeting went into executive session at 2202Z.

The meeting came out of executive session at 2210Z.

Department Updates

1. Operations – TB

TB provided a brief update on the department, his future role, and the recruitment process for VP Supervisors and VP Pilot training.

2. Europe, Middle East and Africa – SI

SI reported on staffing changes to VATSAF, as well as requests from divisions to designate new major airports. Those divisions making the requests have been deferred until the new GRP is released.

3. Asia Pacific – AS

AS reports a stable quarter in the region with many events having occurred. He also reported on some staffing issues and changes.

4. Network Infrastructure – MC

MC had no addition comments apart from his report.

5. Technical Development – MBD

MBD had no additional comments apart from his report. GLasked about next steps with Velocity. vPilot Velocity alpha is in place and testing well. xPilot and Swift for Velocity are currently under development. New website continues to be under development, and a number of people are helping with the content transfer.

**Action Item: MBD to continue new website implementation
as well as scheduling Velocity testing.**

6. Supervisors – TB

A total of 12 new supervisors were added to the roster in Q1. Due to changes in the VATSIM statistical system, the usual uptime reports are not currently available.

7. Conflict Resolution – NF

NF reports that department is running well. Main challenge has been getting DCRM on board with stronger penalties for the more serious infractions.

8. Membership – DD

DD had no additional comments apart from his report.

Action Item: Per GL request, DD to start future meetings with a report on membership level trends. Graphs preferred.

9. Virtual Airlines and Special Operations – RC

RC had no additional comments apart from his report. He wished to publicly thank Matan from Tech Dev for his recent assistance.

10. Marketing and Communications - MB

MB had no additional comments apart from his report.

Any Other Business

The meeting went into executive session at 2257Z.

The meeting came out of executive session at 2317Z.

TB reminded everyone that CTP is the following weekend and support from all Administrators would be appreciated.

The meeting was closed by the chair at 2318Z