

## Podcast Transcription

### Fly by Night: Captain Dave Chase, MEC Chairman

**Captain Chris Lee** My guest today is Captain Dave Chase, MEC Chairman. Thanks for coming, Dave.

**Captain Dave Chase** Thank you, Chris.

**Captain Chris Lee** Today marks your first day as MEC Chairman.

**Captain Dave Chase** It is, and I want to take a moment and thank Captain Pete Harmon for his work as the MEC Chairman. I've enjoyed working with Pete and I know I can speak for Don Loepke in saying so that we've enjoyed working with Pete under his leadership, got a lot accomplished for FedEx pilots. I've known Pete and worked with Pete on and off over a decade here in the office. He's made a lot of contributions and I hope everybody on the line welcomes Pete back and thanks him for his service. Captain Bill Hubbell's here on his first day. He's the new MEC Vice Chairman replacing me. It's been exciting to get Bill involved and see his energy and enthusiasm to work for the pilots and Don, Bill and I are really looking forward to the days ahead.

**Captain Chris Lee** How do you see your role as you move from Vice Chairman to Chairman?

**Captain Dave Chase** As the MEC chairman, I'll be working more directly with the MEC. There're 14 elected representatives. They're working together very well. And my job is to help them coordinate themselves in shaping the goals of the organization and achieving the goals of the pilots.

**Captain Chris Lee** What do you see as some of the challenges and opportunities?

**Captain Dave Chase** Clearly, dealing with the coronavirus this year has been our largest challenge so far in 2020. It's had an enormous effect on the work we've had to undertake that we weren't necessarily preparing for. But a lot of challenges. The flip side is the opportunity getting ready for negotiations, the opportunities that that brings. Every day we have the Officers, the MEC, the pilot volunteers and the staff working hard for pilots, advocating on their behalf. So, the coronavirus is an opportunity for us to step up and really work hard for the pilots. And I think we've made some enormous contributions towards improving their daily lives.

**Captain Chris Lee** You recently returned from a trip where you operated on a Company jumpseat to China with a layover in CAN. What are your thoughts about the current environment that we're now operating in and the pandemic as it relates to flight ops?

**Captain Dave Chase** It's clearly the most challenging environment that I've ever witnessed to operate in. I know and we all know the number of challenges our pilots have faced regarding just staying sanitary, clean, the hotel layover conditions. It's just been a vast mountain of problems. But I went to Guangzhou, because it was important to me that I see the customs and immigration procedures for myself and process through the hotel and then back out to the aircraft. I want to see it for myself and experience it. It is an extremely challenging environment. It's better than it was, but we're not anywhere near normal. So, over the course of this year, we've negotiated the China OIM, the travel MOU

and then most recently the medical MOU. We think we've put a contractual framework in place to deal with these issues. But from a flight ops perspective, we also understand that our pilots are still facing these difficulties with food or hotel isolation, trip revisions and operational deadheads. We know those things haven't gone away and that they make it very difficult for our pilots. Beyond the negotiating, we've discussed it before, we created our internal work group to categorize these issues and deal with them and you and I previously talked about another podcast, how we created a working group with the Company so that we could take the PDRs and work with their Insite team to get faster responses to our pilots. So, we have some of the mechanisms in place, but the virus itself isn't gone. And so then the accompanying issues and the country rules and regulations haven't gone away around the world.

**Captain Chris Lee** We discussed this in a previous podcast, but remind the pilots a little bit about your experience here at FedEx and your previous union experience.

**Captain Dave Chase** I was hired in January 2001 into the back seat of the Boeing, made it to the right side of the 727 for a few years and then became an MD11 first officer based in Memphis. I think I did that for about the first 13 or so years my career, and then moved up to Anchorage with my family, became an Anchorage MD11 Captain. I'd served when I was down in Memphis on the R&I committee and as the R&I chairman. When I went up to Anchorage, I served as the Anchorage LEC Vice Chairman. Then I spent almost two years as the MEC Vice Chairman and now today as MEC Chairman.

**Captain Chris Lee** What can you tell the pilots about the ongoing preparations for negotiations and as we move toward contract 2021?

**Captain Dave Chase** Our planning and preparation began in 2019. We created a timeline for ourselves. It was intentionally built with some flexibility. We have an experienced group of negotiators. This team has been together for several years and they've done a lot of OIMs and MOUs with the company. So we have that experience built into our team. So, it's just been a matter of taking the current environment we're in and adjusting our timeline to realistically deal with some of the issues like COVID. We didn't want to do a large contract survey for the pilots as they were dealing with some of these other flight operations issues. So, we're going to move that back to later this year. But we obviously have a survey going on right now to gauge some of the pilot sentiment. And we continue our preparation making sure the other committees are ready to go in full support of the negotiating committee and the pilots.

**Captain Chris Lee** You mentioned delaying the broader base Section 6 contract survey. We have a current survey that's in place now. What's the goal of that survey?

**Captain Dave Chase** The goal of the survey is to gauge pilot sentiment from the Company and Union response to the COVID crisis. We'd like to get some feedback on the recently negotiated China OIM and the MOUs. We'd like to get a broad gauge of the pilot's feelings on treatment by management, our unity, their view of the union and the company and the company's financial health. Some people ask, why do we do phone surveys and web surveys and what's the difference? We've worked with a pollster for a long time. He has many decades of experience and we definitely rely on his experience to guide us depending on the types of questions we want the answers to. He's told us many, many times when we've asked the question that he's willing to do the phone surveys with a broader population than we typically ask for. So, this survey will be 600 people. But he tells us we're going to get the same answer. We're just going to pay more for it. And the

window will be open longer. So, we're satisfied with getting statistically valid answers. For the web survey, we want to provide opportunities, though, for every pilot to participate. A web survey is susceptible to something called self-selection bias, where people who are motivated in a certain topic may come out to answer the question. So, we need a higher response rate and that can sometimes be more difficult to get. For Section 6 bargaining, we believe it's necessary to provide everybody an opportunity, especially with the free text response that we want to be able to go through on our own. Everybody gets a chance to provide input and we get a chance to see everybody's input individually.

**Captain Chris Lee** Retirement consistently surveys high in that our pilots expect to see an improvement, especially on the pension side. What efforts are being made to prepare the pilots in this area?

**Captain Dave Chase** We've been spending a lot of time on retirement since the 2015 contract was ratified. Anything that's this important and the pilots have put this much emphasis on as a goal for the organization, we want to make sure there's some education before they get surveyed again. And we know we've had a lot of turnover in our crew force and we just think it's important to kind of reset on the topic, provide some education on what exists within the defined benefit and defined contribution world as it relates to our contract or even what some of the challenges are in those areas. So, we have podcasts and videos that are being created in coordination of the R&I committee and the Negotiating committee that are going to come out. And it should provide an opportunity for each pilot to listen and gain some more understanding of what our contractual benefits are and what maybe some of our goals can be. And then they can provide that feedback in the surveys to help us better align our goals for contract 2021.

**Captain Chris Lee** Dave, thanks again for coming. Any final thoughts?

**Captain Dave Chase** Yeah, my final thought is to have the pilots continue to look out for one another. I think throughout this crisis we've seen in the PDRs the concern that pilots have had not only for the operation, but for their coworkers and their families. But as we move ahead. I think with the OIM and the MOUs, we have a good structure in place to deal with some of those contractual issues created by the crisis. I think now as a union, we need to find ways to engage with one another that are unique and things we haven't seen before. We can't obviously ask our pilots to come together in large groups or have meetings and rallies. So, I would hope everybody can be flexible and proactive, stay engaged with us, listen to these podcasts and the videos. We're gonna work hard to reach out to our pilots to keep them involved in the process as we move towards contract negotiations. I know I can speak for the MEC, the officers, the staff, all the volunteers we're super motivated. We're ready to continue advocating for the pilots' concerns. So, continue to send in the PDRs. Talk to your reps. Find your P2P members in the crew room. Tell them your thoughts. Ask them what's going on and we'll continue the hard work as the days move ahead.

**Captain Chris Lee** Well, thanks again Dave, and thanks for listening. If you have any questions, comments, please send me an email to [fdxpodcast@alpa.org](mailto:fdxpodcast@alpa.org) and as always, be safe out there and we'll see you next time.