

Athens Country Amateur Radio Association

Minutes of the meeting of April 19, 2011, as amended

In Attendance:	John Biddle	W8PG
	Greg Broadhurst	KC8JWY
	Gary Carter	KD8MSR
	Jim Crouse	KC8OVB
	Mike Cunningham	KD8PUI
	Bob Curtis	KD8FRQ
	John McCutcheon	N8XWO
	Drew McDaniel	W8MHV
	Eric McFadden	WD8RIF
	Jeff Slattery	N8SUZ
	John Thomas	KC8JWZ

Following the social gathering at 7:00pm the meeting was called to order at 7:29 pm by Vice-President Drew McDaniel, W8MHV.

The minutes of the March 15, 2011 meeting were distributed by co-secretary Eric McFadden. The minutes were accepted as distributed

Treasurer Jim Crouse, KC8OVB, reported that the ACARA now has 46 paid members. He distributed the financial report which was accepted as distributed.

President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, took over the meeting.

Old Business

Athens Marathon

Jim Crouse reported that the membership provided good support of this event with 24 operators on the net. No major incidents were experienced. Jim thanked the membership for their work on the event, especially in this transitional year when management of the event is passing to a new group.

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that this year Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ, rode APRS-equipped bicycle-mobile with the last runner after first working a full shift at his aid station assignment. Eric thanked Rob Jacobson, KB9AFT, for his work in creating the web/smart-phone apps that allowed non-hams to view the positions of the race leader and last runner in real-time on a map, and he thanked Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, for his work in setting up the APRS network with included two on-course digipeaters.

MS Walk

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, thanked the eight club members for their support of this and reported that 81 walkers braved the rain to walk the course. Jeff reported that Ted Jacobson and Eric McFadden both walked the course, APRS-equipped with the club's Byonics Micro-Trak AIO trackers; Ted walked behind the last walker and Eric walked with the lead walker. Jeff reported that the APRS map projected on the wall in the Community Center was greatly appreciated by the event organizers. Jeff ran the communications net on a two-meter simplex frequency as an exercise in operating without a repeater.

Jeff reported that the organizers indicated the club would be invited to provide communications support again next year.

Hamfest – Sunday, May 1

Eric McFadden reported that Dovetail Solar accepted the invitation to have their demonstration-trailer at the hamfest; the trailer's photovoltaic array (PV) and battery-bank will power the hamfest's mobile check-in station and possibly the public-address system.

Eric reported that 1000 tickets have been printed and he gave them to Jim Crouse.

The Community Center walk-through was tentatively scheduled pending availability of the Community Center's Rich Campitelli. (The day after the meeting, Eric McFadden re-scheduled the walk-through for Monday, April 25, 3pm, in order to fit in Mr. Campitelli's calendar.)

Carl Denbow, N8VZ, has the ticket drum; Eric will arrange to get it from him.

Eric will contact Ron Chapman, Sr., N8HEK, and pick up his public address system.

Eric will contact the city garage to notify them that John McCutcheon, N8XWO, will pick up the 30 traffic cones on Friday, April 29.

Jim Crouse gave flyers and postcards to Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, who will take them to the Jackson Hamfest on April 23. Jim reported he has sent fifty flyers and complimentary tickets to clubs in the region as well as 611 reminder postcards to individuals. (Correction: changed "the Jackson" to "the Jackson Hamfest".)

John McCutcheon reminded Eric McFadden that a roll of duct tape is needed at the hamfest.

Eric McFadden asked if the repeater should be re-connected to the possibly-ailing antenna prior to the hamfest. (See below for more information about the repeater's status.) The consensus was that the repeater should be left connected to the known-good lower-profile antenna.

Hamfest – Sunday, May 1 (cont'd)

Jim Crouse reported he has not yet received door prizes from R&L; he will check into this.

Eric McFadden reported he has door prizes from Universal Radio and literature from the ARRL. Eric was asked if he has the gift-certificates from ARRL; Eric didn't remember but said he would check.

Repeater – Possible move of 9-1-1 System

WD8RIF reported he has sent the letter to Doug Bentley, Athens 9-1-1 Chief of Operations, regarding the possible move of the 9-1-1 system to the formerly-SEOEMS tower, but no answer has yet been received. There are two significant issues regarding a move of the 9-1-1 system: the repeater could lose generator-backup and the ACARA might need to start paying the repeater building electric bill. (Currently, the electric bill is paid by Athens Police Department.

Field Day – June 25-26

Eric McFadden reported that the Field Day Committee has not yet met to begin planning for Field Day. He said the club's participation is very likely to remain in Class 1A. He added that the new Field Day rules allow a free VHF/UHF station and the club will set up and operate the free VHF/UHF station if a sufficient number of operators are available. Eric added that Carl Denbow plans to provide and operate a PSK station.

Eric stated he will schedule a Field Day planning meeting after the May 1 hamfest date.

June Picnic – June 21, 5pm, at Dairy Lane shelter house

Jim Crouse reported that the Dairy Lane shelter house has been reserved.

New Business

Repeater antenna failure

Repeater Trustee Eric McFadden reported the repeater antenna is showing a 5:1 SWR on the repeater input-frequency. He measured this SWR where the feedline enters the repeater rack, without the bandpass-filter or cavities in-line. Eric reported that the repeater is currently connected to one of the packet-node antennas; this antenna is mounted on pole attached to the front of the repeater building and is about 10' above the ground.

Drew McDaniel suggested Eric measure without the Polyphasor in-line; Eric agreed to do so.

Repeater antenna failure (cont'd)

Eric will attempt to determine if the problem is the antenna itself, the feedline, or the Polyphasor.

Jim Crouse made a motion that Eric McFadden determine the cost to purchase a new antenna and feedline and the cost of installing the antenna and feedline on the tower, with the executive committee authorized to make the final decision regarding the expenditure of funds. John McCutcheon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by vote.

Repeater interference with Logan repeater

Eric McFadden reported that Ted Jacobson was contacted by Bill Hopstetter, W8LGX, about the ACARA repeater interfering with the Logan repeater. Eric reports that Ted thinks this might be a simple case of intermod or it might be related to the repeater antenna failure. Eric reported he has not yet been contacted by Mr. Hopstetter.

UHF Repeater

Eric McFadden reported that he was contacted by Ted Jacobson concerning the 440MHz linked repeater currently installed on the former-SEOEMS tower. This repeater, which appears to be an "orphan", may need to be relocated because of a 9-1-1 system move to the SEOEMS tower. Ted thinks the ACARA might wish to take over operation of this system. The current point-of-contact appears to be Justin Drummond, KD8EAD, in Londonderry, Ohio. Attached below is the email that Ted sent to Eric:

The site was originally constructed in Spring, 2006 by Ron Erb (WO8Z) whose call is still on the system. Ron is a high-dollar engineer who has since taken a job out of the United States. Upon exiting, he essentially transferred the equipment to joint custody of the Jackson OH ARC and the Scioto Valley ARC. My 'guess' is that if ACARA or ARES were to agree to take over maintenance/supervision of this repeater, the associated equipment would simply be transferred to ACARA/ARES at no cost.

Last time I saw this system, it was mounted in an open frame relay rack. The rack and the installed 50 amp Astron Power Supply are Athens County property. I am attaching the 'as built' technical specs for this system as an MS-Word file. There is a third unused run of hardline up the tower which was intended to be a six meter remote base attached to this repeater.

The current configuration is to link the system over to Bainbridge on the 220 freq noted. I suppose if 9-1-1 wants this gear out of the crowded SEOEMS building, it might be able to be moved over to the ACARA building,....assuming Athens PD moves their stuff elsewhere.

UHF Repeater (cont'd)

The assembled membership discussed taking over this system. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, agreed to serve as repeater trustee should the ACARA take over this repeater. Drew McDaniel made a motion that WD8RIF be authorized to investigate the possibility of our assuming responsibility for this repeater. The motion was seconded by Jeff Slattery. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. (Correction: changed "but vote" to "by voice vote".)

Handheld counters

Jeff Slattery suggested that hand-held counters would be useful to have when providing communications support events such as the marathon and the MS Walk. He thinks these can be purchased for approximately \$5.00 each. Jeff made a motion that the ACARA authorize the purchase of six handheld counting units for marathon and other public service events to help operators to keep track of the numbers of participants. The motion was seconded by John McCutcheon. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. (Corrections: added first and second sentences; corrected quantity; had said "five". Changed "by vote" to "by voice vote".)

Program

Eric McFadden presented a short NASA video, "What Happened to Our Sunspots?"

Eric McFadden presented an ARRL video on H.R. 607, "Broadband for First Responders Act of 2011"; H.R. 607 threatens to take two-thirds of the current 440MHz band away from radio amateurs. Eric passed around pre-printed letters addressed to Representative Bill Johnson opposing H.R. 607. Interested members signed letters and returned them to Eric; Eric will mail these letters to the Mr. Johnson via ARRL's agent, Chwat & Co. (Read more about H.R. 607 here: <http://www.arrl.org/hr-607>.)

The meeting was adjourned by President Eric McFadden

Respectfully submitted by Eric McFadden, co-secretary.