

Due to concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held via teleconference. There was no program and no show-and-tell.

The meeting was called to order at 7:06pm by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

Attendance

Michael Baxla, KE8ICP
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Marc Richards, KC8MCW
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Joe Weber, KE8LRZ

Corrections/Additions to Minutes

Due to this being a teleconference-only meeting, no hard-copies of the February Minutes were distributed.

A motion to accept the February Minutes as published on the ACARA website was made by Marc Richards, KC8MCW. The motion was seconded by Carl Denbow, N8VZ. The motion passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

Due to this being a teleconference-only meeting, no hard-copies of the Treasurer's Report were distributed. A PDF of the Treasurer's Report will be published on the ACARA website along with these Meeting Minutes.

Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, presented the Treasurer's Report. The club treasury holds \$3775.22 in unencumbered funds. The *Jim Crouse Memorial Fund* holds \$90.28 following donations by Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, and Carl Denbow, N8VZ.

Drew reported that the *Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station Sustainable Funding Task Force* consisting of himself; Carl Denbow, N8VZ; and Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ, has met. One idea under discussion is to ask those community organizations that the ACARA supports to consider making donations to the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station fund.

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, notified the Treasurer that Marc Richards, KC8MCW, has interest in purchasing the club's ICOM IC-701 station. The proceeds from the sale of this station are to be applied to the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station fund. Drew agreed to handle the sale of this equipment.

Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ, made a motion that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as delivered. Marc Richards, KC8MCW, seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.

Old Business**VHF System Fusion Repeater**

VHF Repeater Trustee Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the 2m repeater antenna and feedline were successfully moved by Intellwave from the ATC-owned tower to the co-located tower owned by the 9-1-1 Center on Monday and Tuesday, March 16 and 17. He further reported that the repeater itself has been moved to the building owned by 9-1-1 and that the repeater appears to be working properly. Eric noted that the new antenna is located about 50' lower on the new tower than on the old tower and that the "shadowing" caused by the tower is in a different direction than previously.

Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, asked why the move had had to be made. Eric explained that ATC had notified ACARA two or three years back that ACARA would need to begin paying a monthly lease-fee to remain on the tower.

UHF System Fusion Repeater

UHF Repeater Trustee Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the UHF System Fusion Repeaters is functioning. He has been able to bring up the repeater from Albany, Nelsonville, Guysville, and Torch.

VHF DMR Repeater

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported no updates on this project.

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, mentioned that at the last meeting some members voiced concerns that the DMR repeater is to be on VHF but members have purchased UHF DMR equipment, Jeff explained that the DMR repeater will be on VHF because we were able to coordinate with the Ohio Area Repeater Council to use the existing Athens frequency of 146.625 MHz. Jeff added that most available DMR transceivers are dual-band.

Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, asked Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, if the Hustler BTV antenna is still lying on the roof. Jeff reported that the Red Cross maintenance man has been on the roof and reported to Jeff that the antenna base remains flat on the roof but the antenna itself has come loose from the base. Two of the "top-hat" rods are bent or broken. Eric told Jeff he can supply replacement top-hat rods. Jeff reported he will deploy additional counterpoise wires on the roof when he repairs the antenna.

Technician License Class and VE

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the class was attended by five students but only two of these students tested on the 17th. Both of these students passed their tests and are now Technician Class licensees.

Jeff reported that the VE test session on the 17th was a success: "Last night was probably one of the last Ohio VE license testing sessions due to the current COVID-19 public health issue. The combined ACARA/SCARF VE team tested a total of ten candidates, each earning a new license or upgrade. Congratulations to all our successful candidates. Thanks to our examiners for their willingness to test with precautions to prevent any kind of disease spread - Scott Green, KD8KZG, Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, John McCutcheon, N8XWO, and Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ."

Upcoming Event:

Athens Hamfest – Sunday, April 26, 2020

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he contacted the Community Center by telephone on March 16. Our previous contact at the Community Center, Andrew Chiki, is no longer employed at the Community Center and his replacement has not yet been selected or announced. During this call, Eric learned that the Community will be closing for an unspecified time beginning at 9pm on March 16.

Eric reported that on March 12, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine declared that gatherings of 100 or more persons are prohibited for an unspecified time.

Eric reported that on the March 16, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended against gatherings of 50 or more over the next eight weeks. Eric noted that the ACARA Athens Hamfest is scheduled to take place within six weeks.

Eric asked the question: should the ACARA cancel the Athens Hamfest?

Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, stated that the ACARA should not yet cancel the Athens Hamfest because the ongoing situation is fluid and once the hamfest is canceled, it can't be un-canceled.

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, stated that he believes the ACARA should cancel the Athens Hamfest in order to comply with the CDC's recommendations.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the State of Ohio Press Conference of the 17th indicated that the need to maintain social distance will continue through mid-summer. Jeff added that the ACARA should consider that hamfests draw participants from the very demographic most vulnerable to COVID-19.

Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ, stated that he has personal concerns about working the gate at the Hamfest; if the hamfest takes place, he will not participate.

Carl Denbow made the motion, "we wait until April 1 and let the Executive Committee decide at that time whether we hold or cancel the Hamfest".

Joe Weber, KE8LRZ, asked who is on the Executive Committee. Eric explained that the Executive Committee consists of the ACARA's elected officers.

Kirk asked if we could reach out to our regular vendors and ask them their intentions. Eric will ask Carl Denbow to do that.

Kirk seconded Carl's motion. The vote passed without dissent.

Club Construction Project – Copper 2m J-Pole Antenna

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, announced that this group-build will be postponed until conditions are better. He thinks perhaps it can occur in late summer.

Club Construction Project – nanoVNA

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he and Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, have been discussing a possible group project based around “nanoVNA”, an inexpensive vector network analyzer from China. The nanoVNA is available for purchase for less than \$40 and provides useful functionality including antenna analyzer functionality. The idea would be that members could purchase the nanoVNA and Drew and Eric would provide training on the use of the device in a group setting.

Drew announced that this project will be postponed until conditions are better.

ACARA Monthly 2-Meter Net

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that he has not yet been able to develop a cadre of new net-control operators but will so do soon. Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, suggested that during the pandemic, we might consider changing the monthly net to a weekly net.

Watch email and the ACARA website for updates.

All Athens Special Event

Carl Denbow, N8VZ, reported that due to loss of files, he will start work on this project from scratch.

ACARA Constitution and Bylaws

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members this topic has been tabled until summer. During the summer, the Executive Committee will meet to re-write the Constitution and Bylaws. The re-written documents will be presented to the membership for a vote in September or October. (The current Constitution and Bylaws documents were attached to the minutes of the January 21, 2020 ACARA meeting, which can be viewed here: http://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=37.)

Upcoming Public Service Event:

Iron Furnace Trail Run – ~~Saturday, April 4, 2020~~

Event Sponsor: Southeastern Ohio Trail Runners / Michael Owen
<https://www.ironfurnacetrailrun.com/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, announced that due to concerns about COVID-19, this event has been canceled.

Upcoming Public Service Event:

Athens Gravel Challenge – ~~Saturday, April 11, 2020~~

Event Sponsor: Team Athens Cycling / Todd Acheson

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, announced that due to concerns about COVID-19, this event is being rescheduled for July 25 or August 1, 2020. Watch for an email or check the ACARA website for updates.

Upcoming Public Service Event:

Athens Marathon – ~~Sunday, April 19, 2020~~

Event Sponsor: Athens Marathon Committee / Lisa Simons
<https://www.athensohiomarathon.com/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, announced that due to concerns about COVID-19, this event has been canceled. The date for next year's marathon is April 18, 2021.

Upcoming Social Event:

Lake Hope Bicycle Race – Sunday, May 31, 2020

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, announced that this event has not yet been canceled due to concerns about COVID-19. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, is in contact with the organizers. Watch email or the ACARA website for updates.

Red Cross Volunteers

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, explained that the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio needs additional amateur radio volunteers. Watch for an email from Jeff with more information.

New Business**Upcoming Event:**

Meigs County LEPC Drill – Wednesday, April 1, 2020

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that this will now be a tabletop exercise. Jeff does not yet know if this event will be canceled due to concerns about COVID-19.

Members are asked to watch emails or the ACARA website for updates.

Athens EMA Radio Station

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the following equipment has been ordered for the radio station at the Athens Emergency Management Agency: ICOM IC-7300 HF transceiver, a Hustler 6-BTV vertical HF antenna, an HF multi-band fan-dipole, an LDG AT-100ProII antenna tuner with ICOM-specific interface cable; an Alinco DR-735T 2m/70cm FM transceiver, a 2m/70cm base-station antenna, lightning arrestors, and feedlines.

Jeff will need help with antenna and equipment installs.

An EOC activation exercise is scheduled for May 13. The ACARA might be asked to help with communications.

Watch email or the ACARA website for updates.

Upcoming Event:
ARRL Field Day – June 27-28, 2020

<https://field-day.arrl.org/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he has contacted Paula Carpenter to reserve the use of the Fairgrounds. Ms. Carpenter replied that she has retired from her post as Athens County Fair Board Director but she will forward the request to the Grounds Chair, Ranson Calaway. Eric has not yet heard from Mr. Calaway. Joe Weber, KE8LRZ, reported he knows Mr. Calaway and he will follow up.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported he has confirmed our use of the 9-1-1 mobile crank-up tower through Brian Davis.

Eric suggested members should anticipate that ACARA participation in Field Day might be canceled if concerns about COVID-19 continue through the end of June.

Future ACARA Meetings

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, stated that members should anticipate that the April and May ACARA meetings will be held via teleconference. Watch email, the ACARA website, and the ACARA Facebook page for updates.

Following a motion by Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, and a second by Carl Denbow, N8VZ, the meeting was adjourned at 8:16pm.

Respectfully submitted by President and Secretary Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.