

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm by president Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

Attendance

John Biddle, W8PG (via Zoom)
John Bowes, K3JJB
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
John McCutcheon, N8XWO
Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Tony Peric, KE8VFA
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ (via Zoom)
John Thomas, KC8JWZ
Joe Weber, KE8LRZ

Corrections/Additions to Minutes

Copies of the March minutes were distributed and were also made available online for those members participating remotely.

A motion to accept the March minutes as published was made by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV. The motion was seconded by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV. Reflecting expenses relating to the upcoming hamfest and the VHF repeater, and reflecting income from membership dues and a donation from the Athens Marathon Committee, the club treasury holds \$30,927 in unencumbered funds. The *Jim Crouse Memorial Fund* holds \$69.25.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was made by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion was seconded by Carl Denbow, N8VZ. The motion passed without dissent.

The Treasurer's Report is available online in PDF format at http://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=37.

New Business

Athens Marathon Committee Donation to ACARA

Following the Treasurer's Report, President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, announced that the outgoing Athens Marathon Committee has made an unsolicited \$30,000 donation to ACARA.

Eric received the check from Lisa Simons on April 15 and delivered it to Treasurer Drew McDaniel that same day.

Much discussion ensued about the donation and possible uses for the money. Three motions were made and voted on:

- Carl Denbow, N8VZ, moved that the ACARA purchase an ICOM IC-7610 for the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station and that the Treasurer be authorized to make the purchase of the transceiver and any accessories he deems necessary. This motion was seconded by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion passed without dissent.
- Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, moved that a planning group be identified to create a plan for the disposition of the donation funds, and that this group should be representative of the interests of the members within the club. This motion was seconded by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion passed without dissent.
- Carl Denbow, N8VZ, made a motion that the ACARA Executive Committee be directed to place \$25,000 of the donation into an account that pays significant interest while still allowing the money to be readily accessible. The motion was seconded by Tony Perric, KE8VFA. The motion passed without dissent.

Old Business

VHF Repeater

VHF Repeater Trustee Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that on April 10, 2023, he took the 2m repeater cavities/duplexer to Wilmington, Ohio, where Paul Jellison, K8IO, realigned them using a professional-grade service monitor and decades of experience. After the realignment, Mr. Jellison was able to measure at least 105dB of rejection through each side of the cavities, 105dB being the limit of his instrument's ability to measure. Eric added that Mr. Jellison also verified proper operation of the repeater's additional 2m bandpass filter and coaxial interconnecting cables. Mr. Jellison demonstrated that the longer coaxial cables that are used to connect the cavities to the repeater are not well shielded and he suggested these be replaced with 1/4" Helix cables.

Eric reported that when he reinstalled the cavities on April 11, he found that the 35-watt Vocom amplifier appeared to be non-functional. He explained that this amplifier was initially purchased for use with the club's previous Yaesu analog FM repeater, which generates an 8-watt output signal; the amplifier is calibrated to generate a 35-watt output signal with an 8-watt input signal. With the current Yaesu DR-2X repeater, we had been running the repeater at 5-watts output into the Vocom amplifier to produce a signal somewhat lower than 35 watts. The amplifier appearing to be non-functional, Eric removed it from the circuit and configured the DR-2X System Fusion repeater for its mid-level power output of 20 watts.

Eric reported that for the Athens Marathon, he configured the DR-2X System Fusion repeater to transmit in analog FM mode for both analog FM input and C4FM digital-voice input. He said he will restore the repeater to full AMS System Fusion functionality soon.

Eric reported that the repeater appears to work very well during ACARA support of the April 16, 2023, Athens Marathon. He noticed no instances of reduced sensitivity, and no operators had trouble hitting the repeater except in the few locations along the marathon course where one would expect repeater coverage to be poor. Even the operators at the Monk Run aid station were able to hit the repeater well with handheld transceivers.

Eric reported that the repeater worked very well during the April 17, 2023, 2m FM Net. Kenny Brooks, N8TWU, in Meigs County, was full-quieting into the repeater with his transmitter set at 5 watts. Similarly, Constantine Faller, KC8JXA, in Broadwell, was full-quieting into the repeater with his transmitter set at 5 watts.

Old Business (continued)

UHF Repeater

Eric reported that the UHF repeater continues to operate as well as it has been operating.

Potential DMR Repeater

Carl Denbow, N8VZ, asked if Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, is still considering deployment of a DMR repeater. Jeff answered that, yes, he is still considering deployment of a VHF DMR repeater.

ACARA Nets

In the interest of time, Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, did not read the list of ACARA's weekly and monthly nets during the meeting.

Eric asks all members to participate in the ACARA weekly 2m FM net as we continue to test the repeater following realignment of the cavities.

Club Building Projects

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the end-fed halfwave antenna (EFHW) build, led by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, took place at 2pm on Sunday, March 26 at the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio. The build itself went well but when it came time to cut wire radiator to length outside, an unidentified RF-source prevented use of an antenna analyzer to trim the radiator for low SWR. The team tried two antenna analyzers and even a known-good antenna. Paul will schedule a session at his RF-quiet property for builders to trim their radiators for low SWR.

Seven builders participated in the build:

- Nick Arnold, KD8FKB
- Gerald Carter, KE8WWF
- Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
- Steve Evans, unlicensed
- Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
- Miles McFadden, KD8KNC
- Tony Peric, KE8VFA

Old Business (continued)

Club Building Projects (continued)

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, announced that he will lead a build-session for a collapsible copper 2m J-pole antenna at 1pm on Sunday, May 21 at the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio. Jeff asks that interested builders contact him to “re-enlist” in the build.

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, announced he will lead his build-session for a two-band HF trap-dipole antenna in July.

Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, will lead a build-session for a copper 2m dipole called the “Mighty Woof” at a date yet to be determined.

Public Service Event: Iron Furnace Trail Run

Event Sponsor: SE Ohio Trail Runners

Event Date: Saturday, April 1, 2023

Event Website: <https://www.ironfurnacetrailrun.com/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA supported the Iron Furnace Trail Run in Zaleski State Forest and Lake Hope State Park on Saturday, April 1, 2023.

Seven operators participated:

- Michael Baxla, KE8ICP
- Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
- Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
- Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
- Miles McFadden, KD8KNC
- Tony Peric, KE8VFA
- Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the event organizer again expressed his appreciation for the support the ACARA provides his event.

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Athens Marathon

Event Sponsor: Athens Marathon Committee / Lisa Simons

Event Date: Sunday, April 16, 2023

Event Website: <https://www.athensohiomarathon.com/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA supported the Athens Marathon on Sunday, April 16, 2023.

Twenty-three operators participated:

- Michael Baxla, KE8ICP
- Jon Bennett, KD8ZRQ
- Gary Carter, KD8MSR
- Gerald Carter, KE8WWF
- Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
- Carl Denbow, N8VZ
- Blake Gall, KE8PAQ
- Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
- Robin Kinney, KG6DI
- Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
- Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
- Rob Rose, KE8JDA
- Robin Rose, KE8JDB
- Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
- Jan Slattery, KD8PUJ
- Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
- Mark Summers, KD8SM
- Brian Taylor, KZ8U
- John Thomas, KC8JWZ
- Bob Weber, KE8WWG
- Joe Weber, KE8LRZ
- Kat Wolf, KE8EAP
- Matt Wolf, KD8GFX

Eric reported that the repeater with realigned cavities worked very well during the event. He noticed no instances of reduced sensitivity, and no operators had trouble hitting the repeater except in the few locations along the marathon course where one would expect repeater coverage to be poor.

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Athens Marathon (continued)

Eric reported that bicycle-mobile APRS tracking of the full-marathon male and full-marathon female lead runners worked well except those packets generated near Nelsonville failed to reach the iGate located at the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio. He and Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, think the PROTO PATH parameter of "WIDE1-1" programmed into the trackers didn't allow enough hops for the packets to reach the iGate via the digipeaters of Robin Kinney, KG6DI, at Glen Ebon Road and Carl Denbow, N8VZ, at the full-marathon turn-around.

Eric reported that Kat Wolf, KE8EAP, was to have served as pedestrian-mobile "taillight" operator following the last runner in from the Hamley Run aid station. However, an approaching storm forced the event organizers to close the course early and SAG the slowest runner off of the course, so she didn't get to complete her walk. Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, bicycled up the course to find the new last-runner and accompanied him to the finish.

The Athens Marathon was the cover story of the Monday, April 17 edition of the *Athens Messenger*, and the story included a mention of Paul Schulz, WD8SCV. The story is available online:

https://www.athensmessenger.com/news/love-the-way-the-community-comes-out-to-support-this-race/article_b22853dc-dc97-11ed-976e-838d6bcfd2e0.html

Eric reported that Lisa Simons of the Athens Marathon Committee thanked him profusely for continued ACARA support of the event, saying that the marathon couldn't happen without amateur radio communications support.

Eric thanks all the operators who participated in the ACARA's support of the Athens Marathon.

Old Business (continued)

Athens Hamfest

Event Date: Sunday, April 30, 2023

Event Location: Athens Community Center

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA was awarded \$170 through the Athens County Convention and Visitors Bureau's *2023 Visit Athens County Tourism Development Grant Program*. The funds from this grant are to be used only for promotional purposes. ACARA will use the funds to partially cover postcard printing and mailing.

Eric reported he was able to arrange with Ron Chapman, Jr., KA8YMG, the use of his late father's PA system. However, this is the last hamfest for which this PA system will be available to the ACARA.

Eric reported that Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, printed and mailed 350 postcards and that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, sent 354 hamfest announcements via email.

Eric reported that he has arranged with the city of Athens the use of thirty small highway cones. Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, volunteered to pick up and return the cones.

Carl Denbow, N8VZ, confirmed he has the ticket-drum and will deliver it to the event.

Carl reported he has received table-reservations from three individuals for a total of six tables. He said this number seems down from this point in previous years.

Carl reported he has received the door prize from MFJ. In addition, he is donating a handheld transceiver as a door prize.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, confirmed that the Masonic Lodge will be providing the food-concession and that they understand they will not have access to the kitchen this year. He further reported that he has received several inquiries about the VE testing session.

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, confirmed that he will bring the main prizes of the the \$100 bill and \$50 bill. In addition, he will donate a handheld transceiver as a door prize.

John Thomas, KC8JWZ, confirmed he will bring and operate the mobile check-in station.

Eric will be sending emails out this week to ask for volunteers to work the event.

Old Business (continued)

Operating Event: ARRL Field Day 2023

Event Date: June 24-25, 2023

ARRL Field Day Website: <http://www.arrl.org/field-day>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the membership that he will be unable to participate with the club in ARRL Field Day 2023 and that Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, will serve as Field Day Chairman.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported he has not yet been able to contact Athens County 9-1-1 to inquire about the repairs to the mobile 50' crank-up tower but will do so this week.

New Business

Andy Riley, W8VKJ, Estate

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that on April 1, 2023, he learned from Ron Chapman, Jr., KA8YMG, that Marjorie Morrison, the daughter of Andy Riley, W8VKJ, (SK) will be donating her late father's radio equipment to ACARA. Ron will handle inventory and removal of the equipment from the house and will notify Eric when the gear is ready to be handed over to ACARA.

Eric said he confirmed that Ms. Morrison doesn't care if ACARA keeps the equipment, sells the equipment, or gives the equipment away.

Eric said that once we have the inventory from Ron, we can begin discussions about what to do with the gear.

Club Callsign W8UKE

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that club callsign trustee Carl Denbow, N8VZ, experienced trouble renewing the club's callsign, W8UKE. While Carl was trying to renew the expired license, the repeater trustees temporarily changed the VHF repeater and the UHF repeater from W8UKE/R to WD8RIF/R and N8SUZ/R, respectively, and took the club's digipeater out of service.

Carl added that the issue he encountered was that it's impossible to renew a club callsign online at FCC.gov, despite the website providing no indication of this. He eventually learned that one has to contact ARRL to start the process of renewing a club callsign.

New Business (continued)

Foxhunt

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, announced that Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, has tentatively selected the date of Saturday, May 13, 2023 to be the date of the first ACARA foxhunt of 2023.

Watch email for further information.

Following a motion to adjourn by Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, and a second by John McCutcheon, N8XWO, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by President and Secretary Eric McFadden, WD8RIF