

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

Program: Members had been invited to bring their VHF, VHF/UHF, and HF go-boxes for a show-and-tell. Miles McFadden, KD8KNC, brought his waterproof go-box that features an ICOM IC-V3500 2m transceiver, a 20Ah Bioenno LiFePO4 battery, a DC-bus, and metering. Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, brought his weather resistant go-box that features an ICOM IC-2100H 2m transceiver, a 30Ah Bioenno LiFePO4 battery, a DC-bus, and metering; he also brought a 80-10m field station that is built around his Elecraft KX2 transceiver.

Attendance

Melissa Blank, Deputy Director Athens County EMA
John Bowes, K3JJB (via Zoom)
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
John McCutcheon, N8XWO
Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Andy McDonald, K8FO
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Miles McFadden, KD8KNC
Tony Peric, KE8VFA
Robert Riordan, Jr., KA4VNK
Robert Riordan, Sr., KM4CRF
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ (via Zoom)
Joe Webber, KE8LRZ

Corrections/additions of Minutes

The September meeting minutes were distributed. Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ, identified two errors in the section about Club Officer Nominations—the minutes mistakenly indicated the vote was to be counted at the November meeting instead of at the October meeting; Eric will correct the minutes and publish the amended minutes to the ACARA website.

A motion to accept the September minutes as amended was made by Drew McDaniel. The motion was seconded by Andy McDonald, K8FO. The motion to accept the minutes as amended passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, presented the Treasurer's Report. He reported that, through a mistake by the bank teller, a portion of the Athens Trunkfest proceeds ended up being deposited in the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station account at Hocking Valley Bank instead of being deposited in the intended checking account; Drew hadn't noticed the error until he checked the accounts online as he was preparing for this meeting.

The club holds \$3,143.22 in unencumbered funds. The Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station Fund holds \$251.57.

Drew reported that membership renewals are already being received. He added that any membership dues submitted at the meeting would save the club money since he won't need to send a renewal reminder for these.

Drew reported that he has paid the club's liability insurance premium. He is updating the club's equipment inventory and will pay the club's equipment insurance premium once he has serial numbers for the new equipment; he currently lacks serial numbers for the two new Byonics MicroTrak AIO APRS trackers.

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, mentioned that at the September meeting, Robert Riordan, Jr., KA4VNK, had suggested the club might consider withdrawing the interest earned on the Certificates of Deposit when they're next rolled over, leaving just the initial principal in the CDs. Discussion took place and it was decided that this topic will be tabled until it's time to roll over the 6-month CD in March 2025.

A motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented was made by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion was seconded by Carl Denbow, N8VZ. The motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented passed without dissent.

Old Business

VHF & UHF Repeater Reports

VHF repeater trustee Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reports that the 2m repeater is performing well. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, had notified Eric via email that he had heard a buzzing sound on the repeater. Eric hadn't heard this buzzing and suggested it might have been a noise picked up directly by Jeff's transceiver and not a noise being transmitted by the repeater.

Eric reported for UHF Repeater Trustee Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, that there have been no reported or noticeable issues with the UHF repeater, other than the repeater's small footprint. He added that the club might consider tuning the cavities and having a climber verify the antenna and feedline.

Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, suggested that the club needs to do work on both of the station's HF antennas, adding that the club might wish to consider replacing the current 40m end-fed halfwave antenna with a Chameleon EMCOMM-III-B 130' end-fed wire antenna ([link](#)) for 160m-10m coverage if the club can determine there is room to hang a wire that long.

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, suggested the club prioritize adding wall pass-throughs for antenna feedlines and power cords for emergency communications and for events such as ARRL Field Day and Winter Field Day. Eric added that discussion about this had begun during ARRL Field Day. John McCutcheon, N8WXO, suggested a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should exist between ACARA and the Red Cross about the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station before such modifications be made.

Old Business (continued)

Athens County Emergency Management Agency

Melisa Blank, Deputy Director of Athens County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and a guest at the meeting, mentioned that EMA will be moving into their new facility in The Plains sometime in January and that the new facility includes a room specifically for an amateur radio station. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, has been working with EMA on this. Antenna support structures for need to be identified.

Miles McFadden, KD8KNC, suggested that as a government agency, Athens EMA should contact his Ohio Air National Guard unit, the 220th EIS, to have the unit install wooden or metal antenna masts. Melissa seemed interested in this idea.

ACARA Nets

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA's weekly and monthly nets continue to do well, although participation in the 2m and 70cm System Fusion nets appears to be dropping.

He reminded members of the current net schedule:

- 2m FM Net, Mondays, 7pm, 145.15 MHz
- 70cm FM Net, Mondays, immediately following the 2m net, 442.100 MHz
- 10m SSB Ragchew Net, Tuesdays, 5pm, 28.375 MHz
- 6m AM Net, Sundays, 5pm, 50.4 MHz – since 2003
- 2m System Fusion Net, Thursdays, 5pm, 145.15 MHz
- 70cm System Fusion Net, Thursdays, immediately following the 2m System Fusion net, 442.100 MHz
- 2m FM Simplex Net, first Thursday, 7pm, 146.400 MHz

Eric extended thanks to all those serving as net-control and to all those participating in the club nets.

Old Business (continued)

Officer Elections

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that October is the month in which ACARA votes for club officers to serve the following year, the nominations having been made in September.

Current officers and nominees:

President: Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Vice-President: Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Treasurer / Membership Chairman: Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Secretary: Tony Peric, KE8VFA
Newsletter Editor / Webmaster: Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Repeater Trustee: Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Packet Node Trustee: Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ

Eric reported that he had distributed via email electronic ballots built in Qualtrics and Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, had sent hard-copy ballots to members who lack internet access.

Members returned twenty (20) electronic ballots, no paper ballots, and one set of verbal votes from Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ. All ballots but one included a vote for each of the offices, with one ballot lacking a vote for Treasurer / Membership Chairman. Three ballots included write-in votes. One ballot included a write-in vote for Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, for Secretary. One ballot included write-in votes for Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, for President; Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, for Treasurer / Membership Chairman; and Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, for Secretary. One ballot included write-in votes for Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, for President; Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, for Vice-President; Carl Denbow, N8VZ, for Webmaster / Newsletter Editor.

Ballot Results:

President: Eric McFadden, WD8RIF (19 votes)
Vice-President: Paul Schulz, WD8SCV (20 votes)
Treasurer / Membership Chairman: Drew McDaniel, W8MHV (19 votes)
Secretary: Tony Peric, KE8VFA (20 votes)
Newsletter Editor / Webmaster: Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ (20 votes)
Repeater Trustee: Eric McFadden, WD8RIF (21 votes)
Packet Node Trustee: Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ (21 votes)

Old Business (continued)

Officer Elections (continued)

The ballots included a place to make comments or suggestions. Seven members included comments or suggestions:

- Looking for more construction projects, simple assemblies and kits that we can build together on a Saturday or Sunday. Not all of us have a ham shack yet. Also, looking for more support for Trunkfests/Hamfests as Radio Shack has dried up and no local supplier for parts, etc.
- A group building project where members build a simple superhet radio with instructions along the way describing the function of each stage of the circuit. This was proposed years ago, but never got off the drawing boards.
- Greater participation by members in the Saturday ham brunch.
- A presentation, perhaps by Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, on the rebirth of packet radio and the recent local upgrades.
- Activity: A class on Parks on The Air with topics on getting started, different types of logging software to use, how to submit logs, different types of park set-ups and the rules.
- Demonstration and hookup requirements for FT-8.
- Continue to work on club station at Red Cross. Maybe new antennas, finish interior of radio room, provide a permanent cable run to outdoors for emergency and contest use, etc.
- I particularly appreciate nets, though I don't participate in all of them.
- Enjoyed the trunkfest (more fun than hamfest which is hard work and a little stressful).
- Social aspects are important for me such as February Potluck, Holiday dinner, and Spring picnic.
- I would like to see more members hold office.
- I like the newsletters and activities.
- More testing opportunities and help with hardware for newer hobbyists would be the most help.
- I really appreciate what Eric and Jeff do for the organization and am glad to be a member.

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Buckeye Trail Blue Blaze Festival

Event Date: Saturday, October 12, 2024

Event Sponsor: Buckeye Trail Association (BTA)

Event URL:

<https://runscore.runsignup.com/Race/OH/Shawnee/RunForBlueBlazes>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club supported the Buckeye Trail Blue Blaze Festival using the Hocking Valley ARC's 147.345 MHz repeater with one station relying on the 146.400 MHz simplex frequency. The event went well, with no runners lost or injured. All three events—the half-marathon, the 10K run, and the 5K run/walk—stayed east of SR 93, so the dangerous crossing of SR 93 was avoided. The half-marathon had nine runners, and the 10K run had thirteen runners, for a total of twenty-two runners tracked by radio operators. The event organizers appreciated our support.

Participants:

Michael Baxla, KE8ICP

Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ

Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV

Andy McDonald, K8FO

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF (net-control)

Public Service Event: Bobcat Trail Marathon and Half Marathon

Event Sponsor: Western Reserve Racing / Joe Jurczyk

Event Date: Saturday, November 9, 2024

Event URL: <https://www.westernreserveracing.com/races/bobcat-trail-marathon-half-marathon/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members of the upcoming event and read from the event's website that "the marathon is a single loop course that is 90% trail and 10% asphalt. The half marathon is a point to point on the same trails".

Watch for emails from Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, as the date of the event nears.

Old Business (continued)

Red Cross Building

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, had reported via email prior to the September meeting that Athens Red Cross will soon be installing a Brivo photo ID card access system at the chapterhouse. All Red Cross volunteers will get new IDs which will give them access to the building via this system. He had further reported that once the new system is in place, the existing exterior key-safe will hold an entry-card to be used by ACARA and others needing building access but who lack their own ID card.

Ericw reported that as of the meeting date, the Brivo system is not yet active.

New Business

GMRS Repeater

Robert Riodan, KA4VNK made a presentation on General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS), a test-free, licensed radio service using channelized UHF frequencies. It is Robert's intention to, at a future meeting, propose that the club build and deploy a GMRS repeater for community members to use. Robert's entire slide deck in PDF format is available on the ACARA website: https://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=37.

Robert presented some benefits of GMRS including that the license involves no testing, the cost of the license is \$35, the license is good for ten years and covers all family members.

Robert reported that GMRS sees heavy use in Meigs County and Wood County, West Virginia, but is under-utilized in Athens County.

Robert explained that GMRS generally isn't a hobby in and of itself. Rather, it is usually used to supplement other activities such as off-roading or as a grid-down communications solution.

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that in May, Josh Senefeld, N8VXR, had reported via email an estimate of the cost to deploy a GMRS repeater:

Motorola Radius M1225	\$150
M1225 Programming Cable	\$ 11
M1225 Mounting Brackets	\$ 23
XLT Communications GMRS Mobile Duplexer	\$170
ID-O-Matic IV	\$155
120mm Fan 12VDC (2-pack)	\$ 13
Astron RS-20A	\$164
MFJ-1104 Powerpole Distribution Block	\$ 59
GMRS J-Pole	\$ 34
Rack	\$
Coax	\$

The club will continue this discussion of GMRS.

ACARA Annual Holiday Dinner

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that the club annually holds a holiday dinner at a local restaurant in December in place of the monthly meeting. The club will choose a date and consider venues at the November meeting.

Following a motion to adjourn by John McCutcheon, N8XWO, and a second by Andy McDonald, K8FO, the meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF