

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

Program: Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, gave a presentation on how to apply and pay for a General Mobile Radio Service license via the FCC website (<https://www.fcc.gov/>), providing step-by-step instructions. Robert's notes and instructions are available as a PDF here: https://ac-ara.org/pdfs/KA4VNK_Successfully_Apply_for_a_GMRS_License.pdf

Attendance

Nick Arnold, KD8FKB (via Zoom)
Michael Baxla, KE8ICP (via Zoom)
Ben Brewster, callsign-pending
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Miles McFadden, KD8KNC
Robert Riordan, Jr., KA4VNK
Robert Riordan, Sr., KM4CRF
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Len Tough, W8VQ (via Zoom)

Silent Key

Past ACARA member Chuck Robideaux, W8DUX, of Coolville died on November 10, 2024. His obituary is available here:

<https://www.leavittfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Charles-Chuck-Robideaux?obId=33673464>

Corrections/additions of Minutes

The November meeting minutes were distributed.

A motion to accept the November minutes as published was made by Drew McDaniel, W8MHV. The motion was seconded by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV. The motion to accept the minutes as published passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, presented the Treasurer's Report.

Drew reported that he reimbursed Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, for postage and envelopes, paid for the ACARA's portion of the annual Holiday Dinner, purchased sympathy cards, and deposited dues received. The club holds \$2,434.12 in unencumbered funds. The Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station Fund holds \$251.69.

Drew reported that interest rates for 3-month and 6-months Interest rates on Certificates of Deposit (CD) have been falling and that the best interest rate on CDs to be found in Athens is for a 10-month CD at Atomic Credit Union. With the club's 6-month CD maturing in June, we will discuss what to do with it at the May meeting.

Drew mentioned that he has received a membership application from a non-ham GMRS licensee and asked how he should handle this. Discussion ensued and the decision was made to accept non-ham GMRS licensees as non-voting Associate members for \$5 per year.

A motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented was made by Carl Denbow, N8VZ. The motion was seconded by Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ. The motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented passed without dissent.

The Treasurer's Report can be viewed online at https://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=37.

Old Business

Reports: VHF & UHF Repeater

VHF repeater trustee Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the 2m repeater is performing well.

UHF Repeater Trustee Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the UHF repeater experienced an issue. "In December, the UHF repeater started transmitting a continuous high-pitched tone upon key-up which lasted until the timeout timer kicked in, gave CW ID then dropped. Re-key produced a repeat of the sequence. After completely removing power, repowering and boot-up from cold start, the unit has performed normally since. Unable to find reports of similar behavior from others in the Fusion or DR-2X groups.io groups."

Report: Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the hoped-for improvements in antennas and feedline and power-cord access hasn't been made in time for the upcoming Winter Field Day, although Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, and Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, did mount two monitors on wall-fixtures in the radio room; one monitor will be for the logging PC, and a larger one will be used for display of HamClock ([link to QST article](#)).

Paul reported that he did bring a new coax run and rotor control cable into the station through the existing "drip loop" feedline access-point. He has donated the coax and rotor cable to the club and they will remain in place for future events. Paul suggested the club should consider installing lightning arrestors on the feedlines and rotor cable and should properly ground the station.

Eric suggested that the club should do work on the station's two HF antennas after the return of warm weather and should put into place a system to allow easy cable-entry for temporary feedlines and emergency-power cables. He suggested this should be done prior to ARRL Field Day in June, in case the club decides to participate in that event at the Red Cross. He repeated his previous suggestion that the club might consider replacing the current 40m end-fed halfwave antenna with a Chameleon EMCOMM-III-B end-fed wire antenna ([link](#)) for 160m-10m coverage.

Old Business (continued)

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 has dropped significantly.

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)

Red Cross Building

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the Brivo photo ID card access system for the Red Cross chapterhouse is installed and functional. All Red Cross volunteers will be getting new IDs which will give them access to the building via this system. The building's exterior key-safe still contains a key which can still be used to unlock the building, but this will eventually be replaced by an access card to be used by ACARA and others needing building access but who lack their own ID card.

SCARF Hamfest VE Session

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that four candidates braved the snow to attend the January 19 SCARF Hamfest VE session. Three were successful in earning a license or an upgrade. A total of eight elements were administered. Ben Brewster of Athens passed both Technician and General and is awaiting his callsign. Robert Wellman, KE8ZWV, of Hamden, who earned his Technician at the SCARF Hamfest in 2024, successfully upgraded to General. David Barnhart, KF8BAV, of Racine, successfully upgraded to Amateur Extra.

The VE team consisted of Walt Jones, WT8E; John McCutcheon, N8XWO; Curt Duncan, KC8QDP; and session coordinator Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ. Jason Licht, KG8JL, came to assist but worsening weather conditions forced him to leave the event early.

Old Business (continued)

GMRS Repeater

Frequency: 462.675 MHz (GMRS Channel 20), CTCSS 91.5 Hz

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Joe Barnhart, KB8JOE, from Meigs County GMRS Repeater Group, delivered a GMRS repeater, commercial-grade CommScope DB-404 antenna, and low-loss hardline coaxial feedline to Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, on December 10. Paul assembled the repeater at his high-elevation property on Kincade Road, initially connecting it to his own Comet 6m/2m/70cm vertical antenna. During the January 6 snowstorm, Paul installed the CommScope DB-404 and hardline, improving the repeater's coverage footprint.

Eric reported that a discussion among several members had taken place via email concerning a rumor that Athens City might be considering giving one of the towers on Roosevelt Drive to the club. Paul took the lead in searching for facts and on January 3 he reported via email: "I had a discussion with the City Fire Chief about possibly using some space on the Rosevelt tower. He brought it up at the last staff meeting. Andy Stone, the Service Safety Director, said that they do not plan on giving up the tower, but they might be willing to share some space with the radio club". Paul revealed that the tower in question is the tallest of the three towers on-site and supports the Athens Fire Department's second back-up repeater.

Eric asked the question, does the club wish to pursue moving the GMRS repeater currently located on Kincade Road to the city-owned tower on Roosevelt Drive? After discussion, the consensus was that the club should try to relocate the GMRS repeater to Roosevelt Drive. Paul volunteered to work with Athens City to determine if and how this can be accomplished.

Paul asked the question, should the club consider mounting a second antenna on the city-owned tower while the club has access to a climber? Discussion ensued and this topic was tabled pending further information from the city of Athens.

Eric mentioned that, through a comedy of errors on the part of Tid Radio, Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, ended up with twenty-five pairs of Tid Radio TD-H3 handheld transceivers configured for GMRS, which he decided to pay for and has been selling to interested parties. Robert quickly found homes for all these transceivers and expressed thanks to all those who helped him find buyers.

Old Business (continued)

Social Event: ACARA Annual Holiday Dinner

Event Date: Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, announced that ACARA's annual Holiday Dinner took place on Tuesday, December 17 at Applebee's in Athens, with the club providing appetizers. The venue worked well, and attendance was very good with twenty-two participants:

John Biddle, W8PG
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
Jane Denbow
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
John McCutcheon, N8XWO
Chalisa McDaniel, N8MHV
Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Miles McFadden, WD8RIF
Vickie McFadden, KC8MAJ
Edie Post
Rich Post, KB8TAD
Brynn Riordan, KB8JDH
Robert Riordan, Jr., KA4VNK
Robert Riordan, SR., KM4CRF
Eileen Schulz
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Heidi Tough
Len Tough, W8VQ
Bob Weber, KE8WWG
Joe Weber, KE8LRZ

The only complaint heard about the venue was that the long single-row table arrangement did not encourage mingling or conversation beyond one's immediate neighbors.

Eric suggested that, with the declining number of nice restaurants in Athens, the club should begin investigating alternative venues for this annual event now, rather than waiting until November.

Old Business (continued)

Operating Event: ARRL 10-Meter Contest + NC8V Memorial Trophy

Event Date: Saturday-Sunday, December 14-15, 2024

Event Website: <https://www.arrl.org/10-meter>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that the ARRL 10-Meter Contest was held on the weekend of December 14-15, 2024 and that ACARA annually participates in this contest in two ways:

1. The club participates in the ARRL 10-Meter Contest as a club, in the Affiliated Club Competition in class "Local". Members who operate at a location within 35 miles of uptown Athens are eligible to participate in the Affiliated Club Competition, with their scores counting toward the ACARA's Affiliated Club Competition score.
2. The ACARA member submitting the highest score to the ARRL wins the coveted NC8V Memorial Trophy which is presented annually in recognition of the life and accomplishments of past-member John Cornwell, NC8V (SK).

Three members participated in the ARRL 10-Meter Contest:

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV	195 QSO SSB	2 pts/QSO	x75 = 29,250 pts
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF	103 QSO CW	4 pts/QSO	x45 = 18,540 pts
Carl Denbow, N8VZ	116 QSO SSB	2 pts/QSO	x45 = 10,440 pts

The winner of the NC8V Memorial Trophy for 2024 was Paul Schulz, WD8SCV. Paul will have the honor of holding the NC8V Memorial Trophy through 2025.

Old Business (continued)

ACARA Technician Class License Course

Dates: Mondays, January 13 through March 17, 2025

Time: 7pm

Location: Athens Red Cross

Information: https://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=51

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that in December, Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, had proposed via email that information about ACARA's annual Technician License Course be sent via postal mail to all non-ham Athens County GMRS licensees and a few GMRS hams without obvious ACARA connections. This mailing would also outline preliminary GMRS/HAM integration discussions and provide a copy of the current FCC database for Athens County. Further, Ted volunteered to create and mail this flyer to forty addresses if the ACARA Executive Committee agreed to reimburse him for postage (\$29.20 + \$1.85 online stamps order fee) and #10 envelopes (\$6.28). After discussion via email, the ACARA Executive Committee agreed to this proposal. A PDF version of the letter Ted distributed can be found at <https://w8kvk.com/gmrs-letter.pdf>.

Eric further reported that Rich Post, KB8TAD, had proposed the club notify the *Athens County Independent* (<https://athensindependent.com/>) of the upcoming Technician License Course. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, sent the course flyer to the *Athens County Independent* and reported at the meeting that two of the candidates who attended the first session of the course learned about the course from information see in *Athens County Independent*.

ACARA's Technician License Course began on Monday, January 13, with five students attending the first session. Three students attended the second session a week later. Two of the students are a father/daughter pair, with multiple family ties to Amateur Radio. Another student also has family ties to Amateur Radio.

Old Business (continued)

Operating Event: Winter Field Day

Date: January 25-26, 2025

Event website: <https://winterfieldday.org/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that Winter Field Day is to take place over the weekend of January 25-26, 2025, and that Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, is ACARA's Winter Field Day Chairman.

Paul reported that ACARA will participate in Winter Field Day at the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station at the Athens Red Cross in the one-transmitter class; will operate CW, SSB, and digital modes; will power the station using a pair of 100Ah LiFePO4 batteries; and will use a field-deployed BuddiHex 10m-20m directional antenna. Eric reminded Paul that the club owns a Chameleon EMCOMM-III-P end-fed wire portable antenna and suggested this antenna might also be deployed for the event.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the Red Cross chapter will perform a sheltering/feeding exercise at the chapterhouse during the event and will be providing meals Saturday evening and, perhaps, on Sunday morning for Winter Field Day participants.

Watch email and the club website for more information.

New Business

GMRS Licensing Workshop

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he had received a suggestion that ACARA provide a workshop for hams and the general public on General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) and the license application procedure, to include walking participants through the application and payment processes in real-time. Eric asked if there's interest in the club in doing this. The consensus was that there is interest. Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, suggested that such a workshop be offered after the GMRS repeater is moved to Roosevelt Drive, if that happens. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, will coordinate with Athens Red Cross on available dates and times. Eric stressed that such an event should be publicized aggressively and well in advance of the event.

New Business (continued)

Athens Hamfest 2025

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the membership that the Athens Hamfest is traditionally held on the last Sunday in April. This year, the last Sunday in April is April 27, and Easter falls on the Sunday a week before the 27th. Eric will register the Athens Hamfest with ARRL and begin the process of reserving the Athens Community Center for the event.

Eric reminded Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, that we need to purchase admission tickets for this year's event, and that we should add a place to capture email address on the new tickets.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported he has already registered the Athens Hamfest VE testing session with ARRL.

Upcoming Public Service Event: Iron Furnace Trail Run

Event Sponsor: SE Ohio Trail Runners

Event Date: Saturday, April 5, 2025

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

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the date for the Iron Furnace Trail Run has been set for Saturday, April 5, 2025, and added that Iron Furnace Trail Run is always held on the first Saturday in April. He added that the courses are changing this year, with both start and finish to be at the Lake Hope State Park swim-beach area, with the 5-mile run to use the trails encircling Lake Hope, and the half-marathon to use a new route on the Lake Hope State Park and Zaleski State Forest backpacking trails. Some of the radio assignments will necessarily change.

Watch for emails from Jeff as the date of the event approaches.

New Business (continued)

Upcoming Public Service Event: Athens Marathon

Event Sponsor: Athens Marathon Committee

Event Date: Sunday, April 13, 2025

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

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the date of the Athens Marathon has been set for Sunday, April 13, 2025.

Watch for emails from Jeff as the date of the event approaches.

Upcoming Social Event: February Potluck

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that a date needs to be selected for the club's annual February Potluck. Saturdays in February are the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd. After discussion, the 22nd was chosen to be the date of the event.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, will confirm use of the Red Cross meeting room on the evening of the 22nd.

Eric will provide entertainment, probably in the form of a Twilight Zone episode.

Upcoming Operating Event: ARRL Field Day

Event Date: Saturday-Sunday, June 28-29, 2025

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he will be out-of-state over Field Day weekend and will be unable to participate in the club's Field Day operation. He asked for a volunteer to serve as Field Day Chairman to organize ACARA's Field Day effort. Paul Schulz expressed tentative interest but couldn't commit at the time of this meeting. Paul said if he were to be Field Day Chairman, he would consider operating at Lake Hope State Park's group camping area.

New Business (continued)

Upcoming Public Service Event: Athens Gravel Challenge

Event Sponsor: Team Athens Cycling

Event Date: July 26, 2025

Event URL: <https://www.ohiogravelgrinders.com/event-listings/2025/7/26/the-athens-gravel-challenge>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the date for the Athens Gravel Challenge has been announced.

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

Upcoming Operating Event: PCARS Ohio State Parks on the Air

Event date: Saturday, September 6, 2025

Event URL: <https://ospota.org/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Ohio State Parks on the Air (OSPOTA) will be held on Saturday, September 6, 2025. He reminded members that ACARA annually participates in this event at Strouds Run State Park, usually at Bulldog Shelter. After discussion, it was decided the club would again participate at Strouds Run State Park at Bulldog Shelter. Eric will reserve Bulldog Shelter for the event.

Watch for emails as the date of event nears.

Following a motion to adjourn by Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, and a second by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF