

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 PM by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

Program: Len Tough, W8VQ, gave a presentation via Zoom of his "(tr)uSDX Field Kit". Len described the overall nature of his kit and then presented each item in the kit. Len explained that most of the items in his field kit can be purchased online for a total of around \$225. Len provided links to the major components in his field kit:

- (tr)uSDX 5-band, multi-mode low-power HF transceiver: [Amazon](#)
- Talentcell rechargeable 12v+5v Li-ion battery: [Amazon](#)
- case for Talentcell battery: [Amazon](#)
- canvas sling bag crossbody backpack: [Amazon](#)
- mini powered speaker: [Walmart](#)
- 9:1 End-Fed Wire Antenna Transformer: [Amazon](#)
- Automatic antenna tuner, 20w: [Walmart](#)
- case for antenna tuner: [Amazon](#)

Attendance

Michael Baxla, KE8ICP (via zoom)
John Bowes, K3JJB
Ben Brewster, KF8DES
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Jessie DeChant
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV (via zoom)
John McCutcheon, N8XWO
Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Andy McDonald, K8FO
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Tony Peric, KE8VFA
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ
Len Tough, W8VQ (via Zoom)

Corrections/additions of Minutes

The January meeting minutes were distributed.

A motion to accept the January minutes as published was made by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion was seconded by Andy McDonald, K8FO. 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 membership renewals are coming in, stating that he has had some success reaching out to the membership using email.

Drew added that as of the meeting date, thirty-two members have paid their membership for the year. Three members who do not use email haven't sent in their renewals. Drew stated he will send renewal forms to those members via US Mail, and he will continue to reach out to the remaining members who haven't yet renewed.

Drew reported on the club's Certificates of Deposit (CD) at Atomic Credit Union. The three-month CD matures in March. The six-month CD matures in August. Drew reported that Peoples Bank now offers better interest rates on CDs than Atomic Credit Union and asked if he should move the three-month CD to Peoples Bank, adding that he doesn't feel the increase in interest is enough to justify the work involved in changing banks. Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, made a motion that the Treasurer leave the three-month CD at Atomic Credit Union. Andy McDonald, K8FO, seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.

Paul asked about funds to perform the desired upgrades to the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station. Drew pointed out that the club has over \$5,000 in a general savings account at Atomic Credit Union and this money is available at any time.

The club holds \$2,795.12 in unencumbered funds at Hocking Valley Bank and the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station Fund holds \$251.73 at Hocking Valley Bank. The club holds \$5,159.53 in unencumbered funds at Atomic Credit Union.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented was made by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion was seconded by Tony Peric, KE8VFA. 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

Repeater Reports

VHF Repeater Trustee Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he received reports from Ben Brewster, KF8DES, of 2m repeater insensitivity; Ben had told him he has recently been having trouble hitting the repeater with his HT at locations where he previously could hit the repeater without any problem. Ben had also mentioned that some operators had difficulty participating in the weekly 2m FM Net on February 10.

Tony Peric, KE8VFA, reported that he, also, has recently had trouble hitting the repeater from The Plains.

Eric stated he will monitor the repeater to watch for issues.

Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, reported hearing “static” on the repeater frequency while driving on Stimson Avenue near the new Athens fire station. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, explained this is a known issue on Stimson Avenue, and that it’s “leaky cable” lines in the area. He reminded members that both the 2m and 70cm repeaters are configured to transmit an 88.5 Hz tone and that operators can configure their transceivers to keep squelch closed for signals that don’t transmit this tone; instructions can be found at https://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=966.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, UHF Repeater Trustee reported that the UHF repeater is operating as well as it has been.

GMRS Repeater

At the January meeting, Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, had agreed to investigate and coordinate with the City of Athens a possible move of the new GMRS repeater from his property on Kinkade Road to the city’s Roosevelt Drive tower site.

Paul reported that he has written a proposal to submit to Athens Service-Safety Director Andy Stone. However, Paul has learned that the repeater is actually owned by Meigs County EMA and it needs to be owned by ACARA before Paul can send his proposal to Mr. Stone. Paul will continue to work with the Meigs County GMRS Repeater Group to try to resolve this issue.

Old Business (continued)

Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that following January's Winter Field Day, members labeled, inside and outside, two general-purpose coax runs going through the wall to make it easier to use them for connecting to temporary antennas. One of these coax runs and a rotor control cable were donated by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV.

Eric suggested the club will want to do antenna work once the warm weather returns, and put into place a system to allow easy cable-entry for feed lines and emergency-power cords. This should happen before ARRL Field Day in late June if the club plans to operate that event at the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station.

ACARA Nets

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA's weekly and monthly nets continue to do well except for the weekly System Fusion nets, participation in which has dropped. Eric 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.

Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, asked about starting a GMRS net on the Channel 19 repeater in The Plains. He tentatively suggested a net could be held weekly on Sundays at 7pm.

Old Business (continued)

Red Cross Building

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that Red Cross has installed a Brivo photo ID card access system at the chapterhouse. All Red Cross volunteers are getting new IDs. Eric added that the existing external key-safe will eventually hold an entry-card to be used by ACARA and others needing building access but who lack their own ID card. Eric reported that as of the meeting date, the key-safe still holds a physical key.

Technician License Course

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA's annual Technician License Course began on Monday, January 13 and is currently underway at the Athens Red Cross. The VE testing session will be on March 17. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that the class is going well with between three and five students attending each session.

Old Business (continued)

Operating Event: Winter Field Day

Event Date: January 25-26, 2025

Rules: <https://winterfieldday.org/>

Report: <https://www.ac-ara.org/?p=2563>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club participated in Winter Field Day at the Athens Red Cross.

Operations took place in the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station using the station's ICOM HF and Alinco VHF transceivers for voice and CW modes, and in the adjacent Disaster Room for digital modes. To supplement the station's permanent antennas, two field antennas were installed: the club's Chameleon EMCOMM-III-P end-fed wire antenna and a BuddiHex provided by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV.

Paul served as Winter Field Day Chairman and seven operators participated and made 288 QSOs.

Paul stated that the BuddiHex antenna worked well on 6,10,15, and 20 meters and that an IC-7300 was used for digital modes.

Athens Red Cross took advantage of the Winter Field Day operation by performing a sheltering/feeding exercise in the chapterhouse, providing Saturday dinner and sleeping accommodations to participating club members.

Thanks go to Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, for serving as Winter Field Day Chairman and to Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, for coordinating with the Red Cross of Southeastern Ohio; and to all the operators who made this operation a success.

Old Business (continued)

Social Event: February Potluck

Event Date: Saturday, March 1

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that due to a change in the Ohio University basketball home-game schedule to accommodate national television coverage, the club's now-inaccurately-named "February Potluck" has been rescheduled to take place on Saturday, March 1.

The potluck will take place at the Athens Red Cross. Members and guests will gather at 5pm and will bring their own tableware and beverages and a dish to share. Entertainment will be provided in the form of an episode of "Twilight Zone".

All are encouraged to attend this fun evening.

Old Business (continued)

Athens Hamfest 2025

Event Date: Sunday, April 27, 2025

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he has reserved the use of the Athens Community Center and ARRL has approved the hamfest as an ARRL sanctioned event.

Eric reported that Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, is designing the hamfest flyer and postcard.

Eric reported that he has verified that Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACCVB) will again offer a Tourism Development Grant. Eric will apply for the grant for the club once the application becomes available.

Eric reminded the members that needs to request door prizes.

Eric reported that door prizes in the form of discount certificates have arrived from Alpha Antenna.

Eric mentioned that MFJ has ceased production, but the company appears to still be selling products. Eric will ask Carl Denbow, N8VZ, to contact MFJ.

Drew McDaniel W8MHV, volunteered to contact R&L Electronics and Ham Radio Outlet.

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, volunteered to contact DX Engineering.

Andy McDonald, K8FO, volunteered to contact Gigaparts.

Tony Peric, KE8VFA, volunteered to contact Radioddity, Lowe's, and Menards.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, volunteered to contact American Radio Supply.

Old Business (continued)

Athens Hamfest 2025 (continued)

Eric mentioned that the SCARF had door prizes from ARRL for their hamfest that weren't the usual \$50 and \$25 gift certificates. Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, volunteered to contact ARRL Assistant Section Manager John Myers, WG8X, or Great Lakes Director Scott Yonally, N8SY to ask about door prizes.

Eric reminded the members that ARRL will send \$100 and \$50 gift certificates.

Eric asked if the club wishes to provide any additional higher-value door prizes. Following discussion, John McCutcheon, N8XWO, made a motion that the club purchase a Yaesu FT-4XR dual-band handheld to be used as a door prize. The motion was seconded by Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ. The motion passed without dissent. Following further discussion, Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, made a motion that the club purchase a two-pack of Tid Radio TD-H3 ham-band dual-band handhelds to be used as a single door prize. The motion was seconded by Ben Brewster, KF8DES. The motion passed without dissent. Eric said he will consult with Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, for guidance on purchasing the TD-H3 two-pack.

Drew reported he is designing new hamfest admission tickets which he will have printed prior to the event. The new tickets will include a field for email address.

Paul confirmed he has possession of the club's ticket drum which he repaired following last year's hamfest.

Paul confirmed he has possession of the club's PA system.

Jeff Slattery stated that the VE session has been registered with the ARRL.

Eric reminded the members that at the September meeting, Robert Riordan had suggested we might consider having a special drawing for the major prizes. After discussion, the members decided to continue having a single drawing for all the door prizes. In addition, the members decided to keep admission at \$5.

Old Business (continued)

Upcoming Public Service Event: Iron Furnace Trail Run

Event Date: Saturday, April 5, 2025

Event Sponsor: SE Ohio Trail Runners

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF reported that the club will be supporting the upcoming Iron Furnace Trail Run, which features a new start/finish location, a new 5-mile course on the trails around Lake Hope, and a new half-marathon course on the Lake Hope State Park and Zaleski State Forest backpack trails.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that he is awaiting clarification on the new courses and any new procedures for this year's races. He anticipates needing about twice as many operators as were previously needed for this event.

Watch for emails from Jeff about this event.

Upcoming Public Service Event: Athens Marathon

Event Date: Sunday, April 13, 2025

Event Sponsor: Athens Marathon Committee

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club will be supporting the upcoming Athens Marathon, most of which occurs on the Hockhocking-Adena Bikeway. Ben Brewster, KF8DES; Paul Schulz, WD8SCV; and Eric will be bicycle-portable with the half-marathon lead, full marathon female lead, and full marathon male lead, respectively, carrying voice and APRS radios. Jeff reported the club owns four Byonics APRS trackers and he personally owns one, making a total of five Byonics APRS trackers available for use during the event. The two newest trackers, which the club purchased last year, worked poorly last year; Jeff is working with Byonics on this and he might choose to return the two newest units to Byonics for diagnosis and repair.

Eric reminded members that the Athens Marathon is the largest public service event the club supports. He encouraged all members to participate in the club's support of this event.

Watch for emails from Jeff about this event.

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Ohio Race for a Reason

Event Date: Saturday, April 26, 2025

Event Sponsor: OhioHealth

Event website: <https://www.ohioraceforareason.org/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club will be supporting the Ohio Race for a Reason in the triathlon, duathlon, and aqua-bike events.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported that he will handle the logistics of recruiting operators and making assignments but he won't be able to participate in the event itself and will need to identify someone else to serve as net-control.

Watch for emails from Jeff about this event.

Upcoming Operating Event: ARRL Field Day

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

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that he will be out-of-state the weekend of Field Day and will be unable to participate in the event with the club. He asked for a volunteer to serve as Field Day Chairman. After discussion, Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, and Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, volunteered to serve as Field Day Co-Chairmen.

Eric asked where the members would like to perform their Field Day operation, adding that he would reserve the use of the Athens County Fairgrounds if that's where the co-chairs decide to hold the event. After discussion, the co-chairs announced that the club will participate in Field Day in Class F (Emergency Operations Center) at the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station at the Athens Red Cross. Paul said he will coordinate the use of the solar power trailer and the Athens County 9-1-1 Center's 50' mobile crank-up tower for the event.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, volunteered to coordinate the use of the facility with Athens Red Cross.

Old Business (continued)

Upcoming Public Service Event: Athens Gravel Challenge

Event Date: July 26, 2025

Event Sponsor: Team Athens Cycling

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

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ reported that the club has again been asked to support this event, adding that course changes for this year's event will necessitate having more operators. Jeff will identify needs and will present more information in future meetings.

Athens Summer Trunkfest

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, asked if there's interest in the club to sponsor a free summer trunkfest in 2025. Following discussion, the consensus was that members do want to sponsor a free trunkfest this year.

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, volunteered to coordinate with the Masons to select a date in August for the event. He also volunteered to coordinate a VE testing session during the event. Once Jeff has identified a date, Eric will register the event with the ARRL.

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 the club will activate Strouds Run State Park for the upcoming Ohio State Parks on the Air event, adding that he has already reserved the park's Bulldog Shelter for the operation. He mentioned that the event now allows the use of CW.

John McCutcheon, N8WXO, stated he would like to see the event return to being a potluck.

Watch for emails as the date of the event approaches.

New Business

Red Cross Chapters on the Air

Event Date: March 14-16, 2025

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he had been notified by Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, via email of an upcoming Red Cross operating event called "Chapters on the Air". Eric provided the following information about the event:

In support of March being Red Cross Month, National Headquarters Disaster Services Technology (NHQ DST) is encouraging chapters with active radio rooms and/or operations to engage in a 2025 Chapters on the Air operating activity.

Operations will take place during the month of March, with a focus on the weekend of March 14, 15, and 16. We are asking all chapters that have active radio rooms to please participate.

Operating Activity Goals:

- Encourage the engagement of Local Chapter Volunteers and Staff
- Encourage the exercising of Local Chapter Radio Equipment and Resources
- To demonstrate to local DCS the capabilities and potential of the resources available
- To demonstrate locations and mobile assets the Local Chapter can contact via radio
- Make the national headquarters department of system technology aware of a Local Chapter's Radio Level and Capabilities

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, stated that he is a member of DST and explained that Red Cross is very interested in demonstrating the use of the WinLink digital mode to exchange messages using Incident Command System and Red Cross forms. In addition, the event will demonstrate the use of voice-modes to allow chapters within the state and region to communicate with each other.

Jeff will serve as the Chapters on the Air Chairman.

Watch for emails from Jeff about this event as plans come together.

ACARA

February 18, 2025

MINUTES, amended

Following a motion by Andy McDonald K8F0, and a second by Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF