

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

Program

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, gave a short show-and-tell of his 2m go-box. The go-box features an ICOM IC-2100H 2m transceiver, a 30Ah Bioenno LiFePO4 battery, a DC distribution bus, and metering in a Pelican 1450 case.

Attendance

John Bowes, K3JJB (via Zoom)
Linda Clark, KF8DQV
Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Carl Denbow, N8VZ
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV (via zoom)
John McCutcheon, N8XWO
Drew McDaniel, W8MHV
Andy McDonald, K8FO
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Robert Riordan, Jr., KA4VNK
Robert Riordan, Sr., KM4CRF
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV

Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, initiated the Zoom session remotely but wasn't able to participate in the meeting.

Silent Keys

Andy McDonald, K8FO, lost his father in December.

Tony Peric, KE8VFA, lost his father on April 5.

Members should hold Andy and Tony in their thoughts and prayers. ACARA Treasurer will send sympathy cards on behalf of the club.

Corrections/additions of Minutes

The March meeting minutes were distributed.

A motion to accept the March minutes as published was made by Drew McDaniel, W8MHV. The motion was seconded by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. The motion to accept the minutes as published passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

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

Drew explained that later this month he will begin reporting Athens Hamfest expenses and income separately.

Drew reported that the club's two Certificates of Deposit (CD) at Atomic Credit Union have matured and he rolled them both into new, high-yield four-month CDs which mature on July 7.

The club holds \$2,087.49 in unencumbered funds at Hocking Valley Bank and the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station Fund holds \$272.75 at Hocking Valley Bank. The club holds \$5,160.06 in unencumbered funds at Atomic Credit Union.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented was made by Carl Denbow, N8VZ. The motion was seconded by John McCutcheon, N8XWO. 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.

Following the Treasurer's Report, Carl suggested that the club make it a rule-of-thumb to spend no more than the interest earned on the CDs—i.e., to not spend down the principal.

Old Business

Repeater Reports

VHF Repeater

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the 2m repeater worked very well during the Athens Marathon. While transmitting nearly continuously for the first two hours or so of the event, no heat-related issues were noted, nor were any desense or other sensitivity-related issues noted. Any instances of operators experiencing trouble hitting the repeater with handhelds were as expected given the terrain.

Eric reported that Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, had reported to Eric on the 15th that the 2m repeater now appears to mute any repeated audio while it identifies in CW. This seems to be a new behavior and should be investigated.

UHF Repeater

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

GMRS Repeater

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, had received a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from Meigs County EMA for signature. The MOU gives ACARA possession of the repeater so long as the club continues to operate. Eric has edited the MOU to properly reflect the ACARA's name but hasn't yet signed or submitted the MOU to Meigs County EMA.

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Old Business (continued)

Repeater Reports (continued)

GMRS Repeater (continued)

Eric reported that he; Paul Schulz; Drew McDaniel, W8MHV; and Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ; met with Andy Stone; Andrew Chiki; and others from the city at the Roosevelt tower site. The city is willing to let ACARA relocate the GMRS repeater to the Roosevelt tower site. The repeater will be installed in the climate-controlled building and the antenna will go atop the 30' tower, replacing the single antenna currently on that tower. ACARA needs to implement an MOU with the city, and the MOU needs to state that that repeater will be used to help the city communicate with citizens in times of emergency. The city will pay the electricity bill. Jeff Slattery has offered a suitable rack for the repeater. Paul suggests we rent a cherry-picker to use in cleaning the tower of overgrowth, removing the existing low-band VHF antenna, and installing the GMRS antenna.

Drew reported that he was unable to find a copy of the existing MOU the club has with the city.

Carl Denbow, N8VZ, asked about Jeff Slattery's earlier suggestion that an APRS digipeater be installed at the Roosevelt tower site. Paul explained that the club needs to take any Roosevelt tower projects one step at a time, to ensure that none of our systems interfere with any of the city's systems. Once the GMRS system is in place and tested, the club can investigate locating an APRS digipeater at the site.

Drew suggested that the club should hire a qualified engineer to inspect the tower and guying system prior to performing any work on it. This suggestion was met with general agreement.

Old Business (continued)

Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported no work has been done on the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station since the last meeting. He suggested the club will want to work on the station's permanent HF antennas prior to ARRL Field Day in June.

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, suggested the club should prioritize the installation of a proper feedline and power feed-through system before Field Day. Paul will consult a professional about this.

Linda Clark, KF8DQV, made a motion that the Executive Committee investigate the installation of a feedline and power entry-point in time for Field Day, and that the Executive Committee be empowered to make expenditures toward that end. The motion was seconded by Carl Denbow, N8VZ. The motion passed with no dissent.

Paul mentioned that the club has access to several suitable field-deployable antennas that, in addition to the Athens County 9-1-1 50' mobile crank-up tower, should mean that neither of the permanent HF antennas at the site will be needed for Field Day.

Old Business (continued)

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.

Eric then repeated that participation in the club's weekly System Fusion nets has plummeted, and that it seems there has been no general "buy in" of System Fusion within the membership, and asked if the club should discontinue the System Fusion nets. Carl Denbow, N8VZ, said that the day and times of the System Fusion nets don't work well for him. There was no consensus following discussion, so the Systems Fusion nets will remain for the time being.

Eric asked Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, who was participating in the meeting via Zoom, if he wanted to report on the weekly GMRS net he runs on the GMRS channel 19 repeater located in The Plains. Kirk didn't respond, and his camera was off, so it is likely he had stepped away.

Old Business (continued)

Public Service Event: Iron Furnace Trail Run

Event Date: Saturday, April 5, 2025

Event Sponsor: SE Ohio Trail Runners, Michael Owen

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF reported that, because of significant flooding that blocked access to Lake Hope State Park and put portions of the race course underwater, Michael Owen canceled the event on Friday, April 4, the day prior to the event.

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 ACARA provided communications support to the Athens Marathon on Sunday, April 13. Although we were short on operators, we covered all the aid stations and had five APRS-equipped bicyclists with the full- and half-marathon male and female leads and the last runner. The temperature was close to freezing at the 8am start of the race but warming came relatively quickly. The Yaesu DR-2X repeater operated nearly continuously for the first two hours of the event and showed no issues with heat or sensitivity. The APRS trackers with the event leaders worked well, and configuration changes have been identified to improve performance next year. The APRS tracker carried with the last runner failed to generate any packets that reached APRS.fi, probably due to a configuration error.

Eric thanked Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, for organizing the ACARA operation; to Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, and Rob Jacobson, KB9AFT, for their help with APRS configuration and testing and for their development of the online, real-time tracking system (<https://kb9aft.com/amp/>); to Robin Kinney, KG6DI, Brian Taylor, KZ8U, and Carl Denbow, N8VZ, for deploying their portable APRS digipeaters along the course; and to all the operators who supported the event.

Old Business (continued)

Upcoming 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, reminded members that the club will be supporting the Ohio Race for a Reason in the triathlon, duathlon, and aqua-bike events. Andy McDonald, K8FO, will serve as net-control for the event.

Additional operators are needed; watch for emails from Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ.

Upcoming Event: Athens Hamfest 2025

Event Date: Sunday, April 27, 2025

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, stated that he needs volunteers to work the hamfest and passed around a signup sheet.

Eric reported that the club has applied for an Athens County Convention and Visitors Bureau Tourism Development Grant in the amount of \$424 to cover costs associated with publicizing the hamfest.

Eric reported that Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, has ordered 1,000 new admission tickets. The new design includes a field for email address.

Eric reported that he and Drew printed and mailed approximately 400 postcards and that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, has sent emails to a large list of addressees.

Eric reported that Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, will bring the ticket drum and PA system. He has also arranged to get highway cones from Athens FD and he will bring these and return them after the hamfest.

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Old Business (continued)

Upcoming Event: Athens Hamfest 2025 (continued)

Eric reported that Drew has ordered and taken delivery of a Yaesu FT-4XR dual-band handheld for a door prize, and that Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, has ordered and taken delivery of a pair of Tid Radio TD-H3 dual-band handhelds for a door prize.

Eric reported that door prizes have arrived from Alpha Antenna, ARRL, DX Engineering, Elecraft, and R&L Electronics.

Eric asked if 4pm on Thursday, April 24 works as the pre-hamfest venue walk-through. This time and date were deemed good; Eric will schedule the walk-through.

Carl Denbow, N8VZ, made a report on indoor table reservations. As of the time of the meeting, he had received orders for ten tables, a slightly higher number than expected.

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 Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, and Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, have volunteered to serve as Field Day Co-Chairmen. The Co-Chairs have determined that the ACARA Field Day operation will take place at the Athens Red Cross in Class F, or "Emergency Operations Center".

Eric encouraged the Co-Chairs to contact Jeramy Duncan, KC8QDQ, for help with the satellite QSO bonus and Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, for help with the message-traffic bonuses.

Andy McDonald, K8FO, reported that he has reserved the 1x1 callsign "K8V" for the club to use during ARRL Field Day.

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>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the members that the club has been asked to support Athens Gravel Challenge, adding that course changes for this year's event will require having more operators.

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

Athens Summer Trunkfest

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that ACARA will be sponsoring a free Summer Trunkfest at the Athens Masonic Lodge sometime in August.

Eric suggested that the date could be selected after the Athens Hamfest is over, but Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, argued that it would be better to have selected a date prior to the Athens Hamfest so the Trunkfest could be promoted there. The members agreed.

Eric and the Executive Committee will coordinate with Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, on choosing a date when the Masonic Lodge is available.

Old Business (continued)

Upcoming Operating Event: PCARS Ohio State Parks on the Air

Event date: Saturday, September 6, 2025

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that ACARA will activate Strouds Run State Park for the upcoming Ohio State Parks on the Air (OSPOTA) 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.

Carl Denbow, N8VZ, mentioned that September 6 is the date of the West Virginia University vs. Ohio University football game and traffic in the area is likely to be heavy.

John McCutcheon, N8XWO, suggested that the ACARA OSPOTA event be declared a club potluck. This was deemed a good idea, and the ACARA OPSOTA event will be an official club potluck. Eric will arrange for fire to be provided in the form of a propane grill. Attendees can bring their own beverages, table service, and a dish to share.

Watch for emails as the date of the event approaches.

New Business

Upcoming Public Service Event: Baileys Dirt Fondo / Funduro

Event Date: Saturday, September 27

Event URL: <https://baileystrailsystem.org/baileys-dirt-fondo/>

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, reported that the club has been asked to support the Baileys Dirt Fondo bicycle race. Paul will be coordinating the club's participation and he and Ben Brewster, KF8DES, are investigating the use of GMRS to help with communications within the Baileys Trail System.

New Business (continued)

Upcoming Social Event: ACARA June Picnic

Event Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Event Location: Dairy Lane Picnic Shelter

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club's annual June Picnic, which is traditionally held on the evening of the third Tuesday in June in place of a regular business meeting, will be held on Tuesday, June 17 at the Dairy Lane Picnic Shelter. Members and guests are to arrive at 5:30pm with their own beverages, table service, and a dish to share. The club will provide burgers, brats, condiments, and buns.

Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, agreed to reserve the use of the shelter.

Following a motion by John McCutcheon, N8XWO, and a second by Carl Denbow, N8VZ, the meeting was adjourned at 8:59 PM.

Post-Adjournment

Following adjournment, Robert Riordan, KA4VNK, suggested that members who attend Hamvention should gather for a group photo. Robert will email the membership with a day and time.

Respectfully submitted by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF