

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

### ***Program***

Travis Daugherty, KF8CWM, and Conard Richardson, WV8JCR, gave a well-received presentation on Meshastic, a decentralized, wireless, off-grid, mesh networking protocol based on LoRa, and on the mesh network they've built in Wood County, West Virginia. Meshtastic operates in the 915MHz Industrial, Scientific, and Medical (ISM) band in either an unlicensed or a licensed mode. Resources are available at <https://w8par.org/>. Travis has offered his help to ACARA to build out a similar mesh network within Athens County.

### **Attendance**

Attendance at this meeting was much higher than usual, with numerous guests attending specifically to hear the presentation on Meshtastic.

- Matt Baker
- Hunter Barker
- Brenda Barnhart, KF8EVU
- Joe Barnhard, KD8JOE
- Michael Baxla, KE8ICP (via Zoom)
- John Bowes, K3JJB (via Zoom)
- Roman Brandan, WU8R
- Ben Brewster, KF8DES
- Toby Coey, KE8WJJ
- Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
- Travis Daugherty, KF8CWM
- Alyssa Duncan
- Jeremy Duncan, KC8QDQ
- Beth Edwards, WB3TH
- Jeff Finlay, KD4CKX (via Zoom)
- Robert Fish
- Robert Grimm, KF8BCX
- Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
- Morgan Hager
- Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
- Conard Richardson, WV8JCR
- Dave Shields, WSCM554
- Brannon Speidel
- Brian Taylor, KZ8U
- Joe Weber, KE8LRZ

***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 Ben Brewster, KF8DES. The motion to accept the minutes as published passed without dissent.

***Treasurer's Report***

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

The club treasury holds \$1,762.60 in unencumbered funds at Hocking Valley Bank and \$5,160.32 at Atomic Credit Union. The Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station Fund at Hocking Valley Bank holds \$329.33. The two certificates of deposit (CD) at Atomic Credit Union together hold \$22,510.80.

Drew reminded the membership that the CDs will mature in March. At that time, he will split one of the CDs into two smaller CDs.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented was made by Ben Brewster, KF8DES. The motion was seconded by Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ. 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](https://www.ac-ara.org/?page_id=37).

**Old Business**

## Repeater Reports

## VHF Repeater

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the 145.15 MHz repeater continues to work well.

## UHF Repeater

UHF Repeater Trustee Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, reported via email that he visited the 442.100 MHz UHF repeater site on January 13. During a previous visit, he had been denied access to the building when the key-safe wouldn't open. He subsequently learned that a contractor had changed the code; with the correct code, he was able to gain access to the building, finding that the repeater was powered off and wouldn't power on. He was eventually able to find that the breaker for the AC outlet had tripped. Resetting the circuit breaker restored power to the repeater. Since we don't know why the circuit breaker tripped, we'll want to be alert for future failures.

Joe Weber, KE8LRZ reported that the UHF repeater worked well for the weekly 70cm net on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Old Business (continued)**

## Repeater Reports (continued)

## GMRS Repeater

Ben Brewster, KF8DES, reported that he and Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, have done significant work on the Channel 20 GMRS repeater.

On a December 12 visit to the site, they found the pump room temperature to be around 85°F and that the repeater's feedline connector had separated. They fixed the feedline connection, and removed vines that had grown onto the antenna, after which SWR on transmit and receive frequencies was 1.2:1. They installed a cooling fan in the server rack, configured to run continuously.

They visited the repeater site again on January 2 to verify proper operation following the work performed previously. With the assistance of Ted Jacobson, W8KVK, and Dave Shields (WSCM554) they were able to acquire a Windows 95 PC to run the proprietary software required for configuring the repeater. They made a back-up of the repeater's configuration and then made the following changes:

- A downlink CTCSS tone of 91.5 was added to the repeater. This will allow users to filter out unwanted GMRS channel 19 simplex traffic.
- A courtesy beep has been added to the end of transmissions, indicating that a station has ceased to transmit.
- The hang time of the repeater was shortened from 2 seconds to 1 second. With the addition of the courtesy beep, the longer hang time should no longer be necessary.
- The callsign of the repeater has been changed from Joe Barnhart (WRVS202), to Ben's (WSGU671).
- The squelch of the repeater was changed from 8, to 3. The hope of this is to allow weaker stations to hold the repeater better.
- The repeater was changed from narrow-bandwidth FM to wide-bandwidth FM.

**Old Business (continued)**

## Repeater Reports (continued)

## GMRS Repeater (continued)

Ben reported that he and Paul continue to investigate a low-level digital-hash that is sometimes heard on the repeater output.

## Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported no updates on the Jim Crouse Memorial 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 significantly. Eric reminded members of the current net schedule:

- Weekly 6m AM Net, Sunday, 5pm, 50.4 MHz AM – since 2003
- Weekly 2m FM Net, Monday, 7pm, 145.15 MHz
- Weekly 70cm FM Net, Monday, immediately following the 2m net, 442.100 MHz
- Weekly 10m SSB Ragchew Net, Tuesday, 5pm, 28.375 MHz
- Weekly 2m System Fusion Net, Thursday, 5pm, 145.15 MHz
- Weekly 70cm System Fusion Net, Thursday, immediately following the 2m System Fusion net, 442.100 MHz
- Weekly GMRS Net, Thursday, 7:30pm, GMRS channel 20 repeater / 462.675 MHz, tone 91.5 Hz
- Monthly 2m FM Simplex Net, first Thursday of the month, 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)**

## ARRL 10-Meter Contest + NC8V Memorial Trophy

Contest URL: <https://contests.arrl.org/10m/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that the ARRL 10-Meter Contest was held on the weekend of December 13-14, 2025, and that ACARA 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 will be operating at a location within 35 miles of uptown Athens will be eligible to participate in the Affiliated Club Competition. When they submit their 10-Meter Contest submissions to ARRL, members will list "Athens County ARA" in the "Club Name" field and their scores will count toward the ACARA's Affiliated Club Competition score.
2. The ACARA member submitting the highest score to the ARRL will win the coveted NC8V Memorial Trophy which is presented annually in recognition of the life and accomplishments of past-member John Cornwell, NC8V (SK). The current holder of the NC8V Memorial Trophy is Paul Schulz, WD8SCV.

Two club members participated in the ARRL 10-Meter Contest and submitted their results to ARRL:

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV	135 QSO SSB	2 pts/QSO	52 multipliers -->	14,040 points
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF	100 QSO CW	4 pts/QSO	28 multipliers -->	11,200 points

The winner of the NC8V Memorial Trophy was Paul Schulz, WD8SCV. He was presented the trophy at ACARA's Annual Holiday Dinner on December 16, 2025.

**Social Event: ACARA Annual Holiday Dinner**

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that ACARA held the annual holiday dinner at Applebee's on Tuesday, December 16. Turnout was excellent with twenty-two members and guests in attendance

**Old Business (continued)**

## Technician License Class

Course Dates: Jan 12 through Mar 16, 2025

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the Technician License Course is underway, with the first session having been held on January 12, and with the VE testing session to be held on March 16. Seven students attended the first session of the course. The classes and VE testing will take place at the Athens Red Cross, with sessions starting at 7pm.

## Upcoming Operating Event: Winter Field Day

Contest Date: January 24-25, 2026

Contest URL: <https://winterfieldday.org/>

Eric stated that he will serve as Winter Field Day Captain this year and that the club will participate in the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station at the Athens Red Cross.

Eric reported that Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, has arranged for the club's use of the 9-1-1 Center's 50' mobile crank-up tower, which will be delivered to Athens Red Cross the Thursday before the event. Eric is considering which antennas to hang from the tower. Ben Brewster, KF8DES, may be able to provide an 80m end-fed halfwave (EFHW) antenna to hang on the tower to provide coverage of 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10m. If the 80m EFHW isn't available, the club's Chameleon EMCOMM IIIP could be hung on the tower to provide the same band-coverage but transmit power will need to be reduced when the CW and digital modes are used.

Eric reported that Athens Red Cross will not be providing food this year as part of a mass-feeding exercise. He suggested that the club might be able to purchase pizza for Winter Field Day participants.

Eric added that a massive winter storm is forecast to hit large portions of the U.S. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. If this storm causes Athens County to declare a Level 2 or Level 3 Snow Emergency, the club might not be able to participate in Winter Field Day.

Eric will distribute updates about Winter Field Day via email.

**Old Business (continued)**

## Upcoming Social Event: February Potluck

Event Date: Saturday, February 21, 2026

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club's annual February Potluck has been scheduled to take place on Saturday, February 21. 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.

## Upcoming Public Service Event: Iron Furnace Trail Runs

Event Date: Saturday, April 4, 2026

Event URL: <https://www.seotvents.com/ironfurnace>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club will be providing communications support to the Iron Furnace Trail Runs in Lake Hope State Park and Zaleski State Forest on Saturday, April 4.

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

## Upcoming Public Service Event: Athens Marathon

Event Date: Sunday, April 19, 2026

Event URL: <https://athensohiomarathon.com/>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club will be providing communications support to the Athens Marathon on Sunday, April 19, 2026.

Ben Brewster, KF8DES, reminded the members that with Robin Kinney, KG6DI, no longer able to participate in support of the marathon, the club will need to find another digipeater to deploy at the Glen Ebon Road aid station.

**Old Business (continued)**

Upcoming Public Service Event: Athens Race for a Reason

Event Dates: Saturday-Sunday, April 25-26, 2026

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club will be providing communications support to the Athens Race for a Reason on the weekend of April 25-26, 2026, adding that the Sunday of this event conflicts with the club's Athens Hamfest.

**Athens Hamfest**

Hamfest date: Sunday, April 26, 2026

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that the Athens Hamfest will take place on Sunday, April 26, 2026.

Eric reported he has reserved use of the Athens Community Center and that Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, has paid the associated fee.

Eric reported he has coordinated the event with ARRL.

Eric reported he is watching for the Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau's Tourism Development Grant application window to open in January or February. Once the grant window has opened, he will apply for a grant to cover hamfest promotional costs.

Eric reminded members that the club will want to start soon to get door prizes from local retailers and restaurants, and he will need help in doing this. He'll also need help reaching out to traditional Amateur Radio suppliers for door prizes.

Eric stated that the hamfest will remain a topic for discussion at each meeting until the date of the event, and members should also expect emails from him about the hamfest.

**Old Business (continued)**

Upcoming Operating Event: ARRL Field Day

Event Date: Saturday-Sunday, June 27-28, 2026

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded members that ARRL Field Day is to be held on the weekend of June 27-28, 2026.

Eric reminded members that he will be in Kentucky over Field Day weekend, and that Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, might also be out-of-state over Field Day weekend, so someone else will need to step up to serve as Field Day Chairman if the club wishes to participate in the event. The Field Day Chairman will determine the location and scope of the club's Field Day operation, and the operation can be as small as, or as large as, the Field Day Chairman wishes.

**New Business**

ACARA Secretary Resignation

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Linda Clark, KD8DQV, has resigned as club Secretary, effective on January 20, 2026.

Eric will serve as acting Secretary until the next election.

**New Business (continued)**

## Kroger Community Awards Program

URL: <https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, had suggested via email that ACARA explore the possibility of joining the Kroger Community Awards Program so that members can designate ACARA to be the recipient of donations based on the members' purchases.

Eric reported that he subsequently asked Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, to investigate the program. Drew reported back on the 19<sup>th</sup> that he completed the application process and that the application was approved for "Athens Co Amateur Radio Assoc" with Non-Profit Organization number BI798.

Members and others should be able to follow the above URL, log into the Kroger website, and select "Athens Co Amateur Radio Assoc" as their selected non-profit recipient.

Eric will write up an instructional page and publish it on the ACARA website.

## Upcoming Public Service Event: Athens Gravel Challenge

Event Date: Saturday, July 25, 2026

Event Sponsor: Team Athens Cycling

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club has been asked to provide communications support to Athens Gravel Challenge on Saturday, July 25, 2026

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

**New Business (continued)**

## Upcoming Group Build: Meshtastic Nodes

Ben Brewster, KF8DES, made a motion that the club offer a Meshtastic node group-build and he volunteered to lead such a build. Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV, seconded the motion. The motion carried without dissent.

Ben will select a date for the build and will coordinate with Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, to reserve the use of the Athens Red Cross meeting room.

Watch for emails announcing the date and time for this group-build.

Following a motion by Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, and a second by Ben Brewster, KF8DES, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF