

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

Program

Tony Peric, KE8VFA, made a short presentation about OpenHamClock (<https://openhamclock.up.railway.app/>), a browser-based possible replacement for HamClock, a system which will fail when the system's servers are shut down in June.

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, presented a show-and-tell of his current bicycle-portable HF station that he uses for bicycle-portable Parks on the Air operations. The station features his tiny Elecraft KH1 transceiver, a 4' telescoping whip antenna, an ad hoc end-fed random wire antenna, and an inexpensive carbon-fiber collapsible fishing pole, all of which travel well on the bicycle.

Attendance

Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ
Jeff Finlay, KD4CKX
Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV
John McCutcheon, N8XWO
Eric McFadden, WD8RIF
Tony Peric, KE8VFA
Paul Schulz, WD8SCV
Len Tough, W8VQ (via Zoom)
Joe Weber, KE8LRZ

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 Bob Curtis, KD8FRQ. The motion to accept the minutes as published passed without dissent.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Drew McDaniel, W8MHV, being absent, the Treasurer's Report was presented by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF.

The club treasury holds \$1,399.10 in unencumbered funds at Hocking Valley Bank and \$5,160.45 at Atomic Credit Union. The Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station Fund at Hocking Valley Bank holds \$371.40. The two certificates of deposit at Atomic Credit Union together hold \$22,587.79.

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

Eric reported that Drew has created a PayPal account for the club so that the club can now accept money electronically.

Eric reported that Drew has set up an account for the club within the Kroger Community Rewards program. Kroger shoppers can select ACARA as their organization of choice, and ACARA will earn a small donation based on the shopper's purchases made using the shopper's Kroger Shopper's Card. Instructions on how to select ACARA as your recipient-of-choice can be found at <https://www.ac-ara.org/?p=2771>. Drew has received the first quarterly report covering the period from 1 November through 31 January; during that time period, three households had selected ACARA, for a total donation of \$1.10. Eric pointed out that the application was approved on 19 January, so the real period is less than half of January.

Eric reported that following a suggestion by Jeff Finlay, KD4CKX, Drew is investigating the Walmart "Spark Good" program in which shoppers can round up their purchases to benefit a charity of their choice. Eric stated that Drew has expressed discomfort with ACARA joining this program because. While ACARA is a non-profit, it doesn't quite meet the meaning of a "charity". However, Drew has told Eric that he will follow the membership sentiment on this. After some discussion, this topic was tabled until a later meeting.

Eric reported that Drew will be soon distributing reminders for annual dues payment and Drew needs to know if members are comfortable with the idea of using the new PayPal account to accept payment of membership dues. Eric pointed out that the club's PayPal non-profit account will charge the club 1.5% + 0.49% of each payment collected. After discussion, the consensus was that the members are comfortable with the use of PayPal to accept dues payments.

Old Business

Repeater Reports

VHF Repeater

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that he has updated repeater coordination with Ohio Area Repeater Council ([OARC](#)) for the 145.15 MHz repeater and has paid the annual \$5 dues.

Eric reported that the repeater continues to work well, with occasional de-sense noted during the weekly 2m net.

UHF Repeater

In the absence of UHF Repeater Trustee Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, Eric reported that the UHF repeater continues to work as well as it has been, and that the blown circuit-breaker issue that happened in January hasn't re-occurred. Eric added that the club should engage a climber to verify the condition of the repeater's antenna and feedline.

GMRS Repeater

Eric relayed that Ben Brewster, KF8DES, had reported via email that the club's GMRS channel 20 repeater is functioning well. It maintained power and signal strength throughout the snowy weather. Ben and Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, continue to investigate occasional interference over weaker stations, but this interference is only occasional at this time.

Old Business (continued)

Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station's transceivers performed well during Winter Field Day, but the station's permanent HF antennas need attention. He suggested that when Spring finally arrives, the club should get permission from Red Cross to climb onto the roof; diagnose, repair, and tune the Hustler multiband vertical; and replace the 40m end-fed halfwave antenna with something that properly covers multiple bands. He suggested that it might make sense to replace all the feedlines at that time. After discussion, John McCutcheon, N8XWO, made a motion to allow Executive Committee to purchase antennas, feedlines, and other items so they will be available when the club is given access to the roof. Tony Peric, KE8VFA, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no dissent.

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, stated that he will contact Athens Red Cross to try to gain permission to access the roof twice, once for initial inventory and diagnosis, and again to repair and replace antennas, and feedlines.

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 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)

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. The classes and VE testing will take place at the Athens Red Cross, with sessions starting at 7pm. Walk-ins will be welcome at the testing session and tests for all classes will be administered.

Operating Event: Winter Field Day

Contest Date: January 24-25, 2026

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

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that the club participated in Winter Field Day at the Jim Crouse Memorial Radio Station in class 2I (2 transmitters, Indoors) on Saturday of the 24-hour event prior to the arrival of a major snowstorm.

Operators were Ben Brewster, KF8DES; Jeramy Duncan, KC8QDQ; Eric McFadden, WD8RIF; and Miles McFadden, KD8KNC.

The operators deployed two field antennas in succession over the parking lot: the club's Chameleon EMCOMM IIIP and an 80m end-fed halfwave.

HF+6m SSB and CW operations took place using the club's IC-7610 transceiver. Operations on 2m and 70cm FM took place using the station's Alinco dual band transceiver. HF digital operations took place using the JS8Call mode using an IC-705 transceiver.

A total of 157 QSOs were made between 11am and 9pm, at which point operations ended with the arrival of the snow.

The club provided pizza from Avalanche Pizza to those operators who were present at dinner time.

A complete report can be found on the club website at <https://www.ac-ara.org/?p=2753>.

Old Business (continued)

Upcoming Social Event: February Potluck

Event Date: Saturday, February 21, 2026

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reminded the membership that the club's annual February Potluck will take place on Saturday, February 21 at the Athens Red Cross. Members and guests will gather at 5pm and will bring a dish to share and their own tableware and beverages. Entertainment will be provided in the form of an episode or two 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 provide 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 provide communications support to the Athens Marathon on Sunday, April 19, 2026.

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

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 provide 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.

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

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.

Eric had incorrectly reported in January that he had coordinated the hamfest with ARRL. In fact, he had submitted the application prior to the January meeting, but confirmation of coordination was not received until January 26.

Eric reported that the application window for the Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau's "Athens County Tourism Development Grant" has opened. Eric will complete and submit the application 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. Discussion ensued and suggestions were made about local companies to approach. Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, volunteered to contact Jackie O's, Lowe's, Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA), DX Engineering, and ICOM America. Eric will contact Eclipse Company Store, Bioenno Power, and Elecraft.

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, reported 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 will be unable to serve as Field Day Chairman. Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, stated he hasn't yet firmed up his plans but hopes to be with family in Wisconsin over Field Day weekend, in which case he will be unable to serve as Field Day Chairman.

Eric asked for a volunteer to serve as Field Chairman, explaining that the Field Day Chairman will determine the location and scope of the club's Field Day operation; that the operation can be as small as, or as large as, the Field Day Chairman wishes; and that both he and Paul will make themselves available to help the Field Day Chairman prepare for the event. No volunteer came forward.

Upcoming Group Build: Meshtastic Nodes

Eric McFadden, WD8RIF, reported that as approved at last month's meeting, Ben Brewster, KF8DES, will lead a group-build of Meshtastic nodes. Ben has calculated that if ten builders participate, the components for each node will cost about \$120. Eric stated that details need to be finalized, but it's likely that the club will underwrite some significant portion of each node's cost. Builders will pay their portion of the cost to the club in advance via PayPal, cash, or check and Ben or Treasurer Drew McDaniel will order the parts.

Since two members of the Executive Committee were not in attendance, Eric asked for a motion granting Executive Committee permission to determine the amount the club will underwrite so that Ben can announce the build and begin taking orders. Instead, Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, moved that the club underwrite \$50 for each Meshtastic node purchased during the group-build. The motion was seconded by Kirk Groeneveld, KC8JRV. The motion passed with no dissent.

New Business

Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia Emergency Drill

Event Date: Saturday, June 13

ORCA URL: <https://www.orcaohio.com/>

Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, reported that Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA) will be performing an emergency drill within Baileys Trail System on Saturday, June 13 and that the club has been asked to provide communications support. The drill will involve a simulated bicycle race in which two riders fall off course and need medical attention and extraction. The drill is scheduled to start at 7am, with the simulated accident to occur about 9am.

Paul and Ben Brewster, KF8DES, will coordinate with ORCA and Jeff Slattery, N8SUZ, for this drill.

Following a motion by John McCutcheon, N8XWO, and a second by Paul Schulz, WD8SCV, the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted by President Eric McFadden, WD8RIF