

Minutes of April 3, 2024 Zoom Meeting
of the Officers and Directors and the Technical Committee
of the Verde Valley Amateur Radio Association

The meeting convened at 7:00 PM via a Zoom call arranged by Treasurer Don Sears.

Present on the video call were: Bill Jean, KK7LGE, President; Ron Rosson, N6XT, Vice President; Tim Sullivan, AC7TB, Secretary; Don Sears, N7PLL, Treasurer; Steve Pearson, KC7TIL, Director and Immediate Past President; Technical Committee Chair, Matt Dutton, N7YIO; Technical Committee Member Bob Shipton; VVARA's designated Corporate Statutory Agent & designated Trustee to the FCC for the Club's Station Licenses for the W7EI Repeater Sites on Mingus and Porcupine Mountains, Bob Thompson, KC8BOB; and Club Membership Chair, Starla Thompson, KE7DTS.

President Bill Jean called the meeting to order and asked for suggestions about organizing the agenda topics. Secretary Tim Sullivan mentioned several possible agenda topics that had been circulated among the Board the previous week in an email requesting that a Board meeting via Zoom be convened to discuss these and other topics.

Field Day Discussion

President Bill Jean stated that the first agenda item would be the upcoming June 29-30 Field Day. An energetic discussion ensued.

Ron Rosson raised several issues about our state of preparation for the Field Day. Ron noted that it takes time, effort, and advance contact with the members to get enough volunteer operators to keep the club's radio equipment operating for the 24 hours of field day. Based on his experience trying to recruit operators for the 2023 Field Day, and the lower turnout of volunteers than Ron had hoped to achieve, Ron urged that active recruitment of operators and assigning times for their June 2024 Field service begin now.

Ron noted that it takes time and multiple personnel to set up the field operating station at the Mingus Mountain parking lot site. At least five volunteers from the club are necessary to get the station set up. Ron also inquired about the availability of the radio and computer logging equipment necessary to allow operations from the site. Ron indicated that some operators might want to operate using FT-8 and FT-4 digital modes from the field day site and he wanted to make sure that we had equipment deployed that would allow such operations.

Bill Jean indicated that Jack Crabtree, W7JLC, provided the radio equipment used at the 2023 Field Day. Bill indicated most of the field operations would probably be operators using HF SSB voice communications. Bill also volunteered to bring a 28-foot pop-up trailer at the field day location.

Bob Thompson indicated that he would apply for the field day operations permit with the Forest Service promptly and that typically we get permission to park three recreational vehicles overnight at the field day site. These three spots are available to club members on a first come, first serve basis. Bob also indicated that he would pick up Carolyn Hills,' KA7LKW, solar panel and battery powered portable power supply trailer that Carolyn graciously lets the Club use to power the Field Day site equipment.

There were discussions about again deploying a dipole antenna supported by the branches of trees nearby our Field Day operating site with Bob Smith, WB6ODR, taking the lead. There were discussions about the pot luck luncheon on Saturday afternoon with Starla Thompson, KE7DTS, agreeing to coordinate the pot luck. There were discussions about having enough operators for the overnight hours on Saturday evening/Sunday morning. Tim Sullivan volunteered to operate the station some of the late night or early morning hours when it is more difficult to find volunteer operators.

Club Secretary Agenda Suggestions

President Bill Jean then called for a discussion of a concern raised by Tim Sullivan, Secretary, about how we conduct business at our regular meetings. Sullivan noted that he sits at the front of the room facing forward to record the meetings but he is having trouble identifying who is making a motion and who is seconding a motion because often the members making these motions and seconds are sitting behind him. Tim suggested that the President call out by name and call sign, if possible, the identities of the club members who make and second motions. Sullivan also volunteered to come up with a draft "crib sheet" that the President might want to use when leading regular Club meetings including calling for motions to approve either the meeting minutes from a prior Club meeting or the Treasurer's Report for the current meeting.

President Jean expressed support for the idea of trying to ease the preparation of meeting minutes by clearly identifying at our regular meetings who is making and who is seconding each motion.

Bob Shipton, K8EQC, suggested some language that President Jean might want to use when calling for a motion, identifying the member who made the motion, identifying the second, etc.

The discussion then turned to other suggestions which might improve club members' participation in the regular meetings. These suggestions included making sure that we get an attendance sheet that is circulated among the members both immediately before and at a regular meeting. Club President Jean will encourage all members to sign the attendance sheet

We discussed changing the format of our regular meetings by immediately after the Pledge of Allegiance having the President lead all members in a round of self-introductions. President Jean will ask all members present at the meeting to stand up and introduce themselves, by name and call sign and introduce any guest who accompanies the member to the meeting.

We discussed having the President and/or Membership Chair introduce all new club members at the beginning of the regular meeting.

We discussed having the President identifying and congratulating any newly licensed hams who are attending the meetings as well as any hams that have recently upgraded their amateur license class.

Vice President Rosson's Agenda Suggestions

President Jean then turned to the additional suggested agenda topics that Vice President Ron Rosson had raised.

Ron raised the issue of whether the club should resume publishing a regular quarterly newsletter for the membership. [Publishing a quarterly newsletter for the membership is discussed in Article 8 Section 1 of VVARA's Bylaws]. Several participants noted that publishing a regular newsletter is not our current

practice. Resuming publishing a quarterly newsletter is time consuming and we currently do not have anyone volunteering to write and edit a quarterly newsletter.

Treasurer Don Sears noted that the Club has a website and that over the years the website has become a primary communications tool to support Club members.

Also noted is that the Club has an active network-controlled morning net at 7:00 AM operating through VVARA's 2-meter Mingus Mtn Repeater site, the Knobby Knee Network, which encourages new members to join. The network provides a vibrant communications tool for those who check into the network and even for those who simply monitor the Knobby Knee network. This network operates 365 days per year and club happenings and other ham radio related topics of interest are often discussed on air.

Club Treasurer Don Sears hosts a regular Zoom Call on Thursday mornings at 1130 AM to which all members are invited. These calls help facilitate communications among club members.

In addition, there are informal club member weekly meetings held in both the Prescott and Verde Valleys. The Prescott side members of the Club can meet for lunch at noon on Mondays at Lunch Bunch meetings and the Verde Valley side members have a regular breakfast at Randall's Restaurant in Cottonwood on Wednesday mornings at 8:30 AM.

Having discussed the several regular opportunities club members have on air, in zoom calls and in person to meet and discuss what ham radio and other activities they are up to, while no motion was made and no vote taken, there appeared to be a consensus among the Board that resuming publishing a regular newsletter is not a high priority at this time.

Ron Rosson's point about trying to enhance communications both among members of the club and enhancing club communications with the public that we are pledged to serve is well taken and respected by the Board. There may be other opportunities to enhance communications about the club and members activities that can be explored in future Board meetings.

Ron also raised the question whether the Club wishes to adopt a more formal Elmer program whereby experienced ham radio operators volunteer to provide guidance at the request of newer hams. Steve Pearson, KC7TIL, pointed out that lots of advice about ham radio operating practices and equipment gets discussed on the Knobby Knee network. Tim Sullivan, AC7TB, noted the enthusiasm and generosity of many members of the Club when our youngest member, Tristan Hughes, KK7LYR, joined the Club. Tristan received donations of equipment and lots of advice from several members of the Club to help him develop his radio operating skills. Again, while there was neither a motion nor a vote, there appeared to be a consensus among the Board to stay the course and rely on club members to volunteer to help when newer hams ask for assistance without establishing a more formal Elmer program.

Ron also mentioned that he thought that the Club should commemorate in some way International Marconi Day (April 27, 2024) which celebrates the birthday of radio pioneer & later Nobel Prize winner in Physics, Guglielmo Giovanni Marconi, who in 1901 conducted the first over the ocean two-way radio communications between Cornwall, England and Newfoundland, Canada. Ron's idea received support.

Other Discussions

Secretary Sullivan then raised several comments and a couple of member complaints that had been brought to his attention at various club meeting and events.

First up was observations of some exchanges on the Knobby Knee Network where a participant on several occasions expressed negative opinions about the quality of health care available in some parts of Yavapai County. This participant recently indicated that he must travel all the way to Flagstaff to receive medical care. Sullivan observed that at least one Club member immediately spoke up after some of these negative opinions were made to correct the impression that health care facilities and providers in the Verde Valley were somehow sub-standard. Sullivan noted that several of the Club members are or have been health care providers and that at least one Club member currently providing health care services expressed frustration about these recurrent negative comments being made on the Knobby Knee network about the quality of health care facilities and providers in the county.

Sullivan also indicated that he has also heard several participants on the Knobby Knee network referring to a local municipality in a derogatory manner. Sullivan raised the issue whether such comments comply with the Etiquette Code which the Club requires network participants to use while communicating over VVARA-owned repeaters.

A discussion of the Etiquette Code ensued. Bob Thompson, VVARA's named Trustee on our station licenses for the repeater sites agreed to reach out to the ham who made untoward comments about the quality of health care facilities and providers in the area. Bob will remind this ham about VVARA's Etiquette Code for repeater use and encourage changes in conduct.

Don Sears, Club Treasurer and Webmaster, reposted the Etiquette Code to a more prominent position on the VVARA's website.

There also appeared to be a consensus that having Knobby Knee Network Control Operators occasionally remind participants of the existence of VVARA's Etiquette Code and encouraging check ins to keep conversations clean, courteous, respectful, and friendly while refraining from making negative commentaries on institutions, groups or people will be helpful to improving Club member experience using our four wireless repeaters.

Secretary Sullivan then recounted some other concerns raised with him by members. One member was concerned about Regular meetings running too long. Sullivan suggested that guest speaker presentations be limited to 45 minutes to allow Regular meetings to be completed within an hour. Several comments ensued that the breadth of the topics covered and the large number of questions asked to two of the Club's recent speakers contributed to their presentations extending beyond one hour and that we do not want to discourage our members from participating in our meetings and asking questions.

Sullivan recounted another member's concern that the informal luncheons that begin two hours before the scheduled Regular Meeting time resulted in the member having finished eating his lunch an hour before the meeting start time. Sullivan and Rosson asked whether we can shorten the allotted time for the informal lunches to make it more convenient for members.

Treasurer Don Sears noted that the Club has always tried to encourage informal conversations among Club members by encouraging members to show up at least a half-hour before the scheduled meeting time to just socialize with other club members. Sears also noted that we depend on restaurant services over which we have little control. Having inadequate time for an informal luncheon before the Regular Meeting can lead to lunches being ordered, served, or paid for during the Regular Meeting which is very

disruptive. We live in an imperfect world and the Club is doing its best to allow members to eat, relax and socialize with other club members before the Regular Meeting commences.

A question was raised whether we can move up the start of the Regular Meetings when there is a significant gap between when informal luncheon meals are served and the scheduled Regular Meeting time. It was pointed out that moving up the Regular Meeting time penalizes those members who choose to forego the informal lunch and just show up for the Regular Meeting. The best we can do is to encourage members who attend the informal luncheon and complete eating their lunch early to get up, circulate and socialize with other members until the Regular Meeting commences.

Secretary Sullivan raised a concern about a long time Club Member who did not renew paying the current membership dues. This ham was about to be expunged from the Club's membership roster. Sullivan noted that this ham has difficulties getting to Club meetings, may have limited financial resources, and has been a regular check in to the Knobby Knee Network.

Director Steve Pearson, KC7TIL, made a motion that the Board grant a Club Scholarship in the amount of \$20 to offset this ham's 2024 Annual Membership Dues obligation. The motion was seconded and by a unanimous vote the Board approved a Scholarship to keep this ham as a member of VVARA.

There was also a short discussion of VVARA's bylaws which apparently were last amended in 2001. Issues were raised about current bylaw provisions relating to naming VVARA's Corporate Statutory Agent; publishing a quarterly newsletter; an annual audit committee; etc. Further discussions about the bylaws will take place at future Board meetings.

The meeting adjourned about 8:20 PM and there was an agreement for the Board to meet again at 7:00 PM on Wednesday April 10, 2024

Draft Minutes prepared by Secretary Tim Sullivan on April 10, 2024