

Minutes of March 16, 2024
Regular Membership Meeting
of the Verde Valley Amateur Radio Association

Location: Prescott Golf Club in Dewey, AZ

Meeting Time: 1:00 PM A pre-meeting informal luncheon was available commencing at 11:00 AM

Present: About 42 members and guests of VVARA attended the regular membership meeting.

President Bill Jean, KK7LGE, convened the meeting at 12:57 PM. Bill lead the membership in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bill then introduced VVARA Technical Committee Chair, Matt Dutton, N7YIO, who gave a spirited & engaging presentation on Cell Site Basics. Matt is currently five years into a career as a Network Field Assurance Engineer for Verizon Wireless. Previously he worked for CenturyLink Communications for 13 years where his last eight years were spent working on microwave wireless communications links. Matt was accompanied and occasionally assisted by his son, Levy.

Matt's engaging oral & slide show presentation, interspersed with his demonstrations of various pieces of equipment he brought with him, covered all aspects of cell site operations, including frequencies used, power supplies, transceivers, routers, cabling, remote radio heads where the transmitters and receiver are tower mounted directly behind the antennas to reduce transmission line rf power loss. He explained typical equipment configurations for more traditional cell sites where the communication equipment is housed within equipment shelters and the more streamlined operations of newer freestanding cell sites where the electronics are manufactured to withstand the weather without the need for a separate equipment shelter. Matt used lots of pictures to illustrate his points. Matt showed how wireless carriers are striving to use renewable energy, particularly solar, to power cell site operations.

Matt received a well-deserved resounding round of applause when he concluded his presentation.

Regular Business resumed at 2:20 PM with President Bill Jean at the helm.

Secretary Tim Sullivan, AC7TB, explained that per VVARA standard operating procedures the meeting minutes for the February 17 meeting at El Toreo Restaurant in Clarkdale had been posted on the VVARA website in advance of the meeting today. Sullivan encouraged members who have any edits, suggestions, or comments to the proposed meeting minutes to contact him.

President Bill Jean, KK7LGE, called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Bob Smith, WB6ODR, moved to approve the minutes. Don Sears, N7PLL, seconded the motion. President Bill Jean called for a vote on the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was approved.

Treasurer Don Sears then gave a short Treasurer's Report indicating that the APS power bill for VVARA's repeater site on Mingus Mtn as late arriving so that the annual premium for the ARRL liability insurance was the largest expenditure during the last month. Don encouraged any member who has a question or comment about the Club's finances to reach out to him.

President Bill Jean called for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Toby Payne, K7ABP, made a motion to approve the report. There were numerous seconds. President Jean called for a vote on the motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. By acclamation, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

Starla Thompson, Membership Chair, KE7DTS, reported that VVARA has 158 Full members including 10 new memberships this year. Membership badges can be picked up from her and Bob, KC8BOB.

Matt Dutton, reported that the Technical Committee has not been doing much due to the weather conditions up at the Repeater sites but they expect to be more active as the weather improves.

Silent Key: KD7SXH

Vice President Ron Rosson, N6XT, reported the sad news that Bob Zimmerli, KD7SXH, from Camp Verde had passed away this morning. Bob was a regular check in on the Knobby Knee Network for years until his health declined. Bob had a long career as an emergency response driver for the American Red Cross. He was first licensed as a ham radio operator in 2002 as a Technician Class licensee where he put his new license to use on Search and Rescue efforts. He upgraded to a General class license in 2020 and was active on ARES, the VVARA repeater and on HF frequencies. Bob brought wit and wisdom to the Knobby Knee Network where he occasionally recounted his life living with five goats, a dog, and a cat. Bob is remembered with affection and will be sorely missed. In Bob's memory the Club paused for a minute of silent remembrance.

Ron also reminded the Club that Gene Crist's wife makes custom ham apparel, e.g., hats and shirts. Contact Eugene Crist, N7EJC, if you are interested.

President Bill Jean reminded all that VVARA Field Day operations in support of ARRL Field Day will be on Saturday morning June 22 – noon Sunday June 23. The VVARA Field Day site will be at the parking lot at the top of Mingus Mountain. Volunteers are needed to help set up the station, operate the station for a 24-hour schedule and dismantle the field operating station on Sunday morning. Volunteering on Field Day is a good test of emergency communications skills, provides an opportunity to upgrade our technical skills and prepares us to serve our community in the event of a bona fide emergency.

The next regular meeting of the Club is on April 17, 2024 at 1:00 PM at El Toreo Restaurant in Clarkdale, AZ. There will be an informal luncheon beginning at 11:00 AM. This meeting would normally occur on Saturday April 20th but so many members of the Club wish to attend the Prescott Hamfest at Granville Elementary School in Prescott Valley starting at 0800 on April 20th, that VVARA rescheduled our meeting to mid-week prior to the Hamfest to allow members to attend both events.

A motion to adjourn the meeting occurred shortly before 2:30 PM and the meeting adjourned.

Minutes Respectfully submitted on April 13, 2024 by Tim Sullivan, AC7TB