

## **RATC Board Meeting Minutes**

May 4, 2020

Online format (through Zoom)

### **In Attendance:**

Board members: Jim Beeson, Brian Boggs, Terri McClure, Bill Neilan, Anne Pfeiffer, Julio Stephens, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher, Brendle Wolfe

Others: None

Meeting was called to order by Jim Beeson at 7:30 p.m.

### **Approval of April 6 Board Meeting Minutes (Susan Terwilliger):**

Corrections: None

Approved: A motion was made to approve the minutes, it was seconded, and the motion passed.

### **Treasurer's Report (Terri McClure):**

Terri said not much financial activity happened last month. There was a \$500 addition to the McAfee Land Fund in April, bringing the total to \$12,155. (See VA 311 Property Update below for more information.)

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 5/4/2020):

Total in Checking: \$55,632.95

Total Monetary Assets: \$70,347.76

Receipts (YTD): \$15,053.13

Expenditures (YTD): \$4,152.91

See RATC website <https://www.ratc.org/financial-report/> for full financial reports.

### **Membership Report: (Steve Urbaniak)**

Steve did not attend. Steve, Bill Neilan, and Terri McClure are working on a membership renewal letter to go out to all RATC members in November. This letter, in addition to asking members to renew their membership, will explain how the club spent its funds during the past year. Brendle Wolfe suggested including a graph for this purpose. Follow-up letters will be sent in February and April to remind members to pay their yearly dues.

### **Trail Supervisor's Report (Mike Vaughn):**

Mike did not attend. There were no work hikes in April because of the pandemic. Jim Beeson reported that the request for funds from LL Bean to buy a rock drill was successful. We will match the \$500 grant with \$500 of club funds.

### **Hikemaster's Report (Bob Peckman):**

Bob did not attend. There were no group hikes in April because of the pandemic.

### **Conservation Supervisor's Report (Butch Kelly):**

Butch did not attend.

### **Shelter Supervisors' Report (Homer and Therese Witcher):**

Therese reported that the Arme property in Daleville was successfully demolished. Grass was planted recently at the site. There were no shelter maintenance hikes in April because of the pandemic.

**McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Brian Boggs):**

Brian reported that large boulders have been placed in the McAfee Knob parking lot to discourage hikers. However, he and Therese Witcher confirmed that some hikers (including through hikers) are still on the trail. There were no Ridgerunner patrols in April because of the pandemic.

**Land Management Supervisor's Report (Bill Neilan):**

Bill had no updates.

**Newsletter Editor's Report (Anne Pfeiffer):**

The spring 2020 Trail Blazer was published April 23. Anne asked for interesting photos to put on the front page of coming editions and some short, entertaining stories. A discussion followed on whether to continue printing paper copies. Mailing costs have increased since the newsletters no longer qualify for bulk rates. The number of members who currently request a paper Blazer is dwindling but there are still 50 or 60. Brian Boggs suggested charging a small fee to receive a hard copy. For now, we will continue to supply paper copies to those who want them, but eventually we will move to entirely electronic.

**Updates and Action Items (Jim Beeson)****1. COVID-19 Update**

Andrew Downs (Appalachian Trail Conservancy) has been meeting with other ATC officials and communicating regularly with AT maintaining clubs. Jim has joined several calls where the pandemic's effect on the Appalachian Trail was discussed. The bottom line is that the AT is not open yet and trail work is still suspended. When conditions do allow volunteers to return, some sort of personal protective equipment will be required. Jim has requested that clubs be given advance notice before the AT opens to the public to do some badly needed maintenance.

**2. Membership Renewal Process**

At the January 2020 meeting, the RATC board voted to make annual membership dues the same whether new or renewing: \$20 for individuals and \$25 for families. This change must still be approved by the general membership. Because of the pandemic, an in-person general meeting does not seem possible for some time, although a remote or online alternative might work. The rationale for increasing dues, especially financial considerations, should be shared with club members through the Blazer.

**3. Membership Dues – Lifetime Amount**

Jim asked the board to consider whether to raise the lifetime membership fee from \$250 to \$300 for individuals and from \$300 to \$350 for families. As discussed in the April 2020 meeting, lifetime member dues are likely to be less over time than dues paid each year, which may eventually create a cashflow problem. A discussion followed on whether and when to do this. Julio Stephens said the club should make both membership dues changes (raising annual membership dues and increasing lifetime membership fees) at the same time to avoid year-after-year increases. The entire RATC membership needs to approve all dues changes, which can only be done remotely at present. Therese Witcher pointed out that club dues were last increased in 2015. With this in mind, and amid concerns of widespread financial hardships, Jim moved to table the previous motion to raise annual membership dues until 2021.

**4. VA 311 Property Update**

Fundraising activities to purchase the VA 311 property are currently on hold because of the pandemic. Jim reported that combined funds from RATC and ATC are around \$80,000. Andrew Downs plans to ask the property owner whether we could initially buy just the home and 1 acre and purchase the rest later.

- Jim said he and Bill Neilan have been working with Bonfire, a Richmond company, to sell T-shirts once the pandemic eases. This will allow us to sell a high-quality T-shirt with no upfront cost or risk to RATC. The fundraising campaign will receive \$10 per shirt, and all marketing details will be handled by Bonfire. The shirts will be unisex with women’s sizes also available. Once the Appalachian Trail reopens, a 21-day online fundraising campaign will kick off, using Facebook and other social media. Jim shared draft pictures of the shirt through Zoom, and board members made suggestions for design tweaks.

## 5. 2020 Annual Meeting

The March 28 annual meeting, at which RATC 2020-2021 Board of Directors officers would have been elected, was canceled due to COVID-19. Jim said we must follow the state reopening guidelines, which will mean tracking different phases as mandated by Governor Northam. It is not possible right now to determine whether and when the annual meeting can occur.

### Calendar:

June 8	RATC board meeting (Zoom)
September	Volunteer Leadership Meeting (ATC)
October 24	VA Partnership meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.