

RATC Board Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2020

Online format (through Zoom)

In Attendance:

Board members: Jim Beeson, Terri McClure, Bill Neilan, Julio Stephens, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher

Others: Diana Christopulos

Meeting was called to order by Jim Beeson at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of May 4 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):

A membership renewal letter was recently sent out to RATC members to encourage payment of dues. Terri said 42 members have paid up since the letter was sent. She noted that many members have paid their dues using PayPal. Terri wishes to rotate off the board as soon as another treasurer can be found.

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 6/8/2020):

Total in Checking: \$57,029.04

Total Monetary Assets: \$71,993.01

Receipts (YTD): \$16,340.92

Expenditures (YTD): \$4,044.61

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

Membership Report: (Steve Urbaniak)

Steve did not attend. At the end of May RATC had 688 members; on June 1 the number fell to 577 (those in arrears since 2018 were dropped). In November the membership renewal letter will be sent out again, with reminders to follow in February and April.

Trail Supervisor's Report (Mike Vaughn):

Mike did not attend. There were no work hikes in May because of the pandemic. Jim Beeson reported that RATC has received \$500 from LL Bean to buy a rock drill; the remaining \$500 will be covered by ATC license plate funds. Therefore, there will be no cost to the club for this purchase.

Hikemaster's Report (Bob Peckman):

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

Conservation Supervisor's Report (Butch Kelly):

Butch did not attend.

Shelter Supervisors' Report (Homer and Therese Witcher):

There were no shelter maintenance hikes in May because of the pandemic. Jim Beeson mentioned that some money may be available from ATC license funds to cover shelter maintenance costs. Therese said a fire ring is reportedly too close to the Sarver Hollow shelter and needs to be moved.

McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Brian Boggs):

Brian did not attend. There were no Ridgerunner patrols in May because of the pandemic. Jim Beeson informed the board that Brian must leave his position as counselor to assume full-time caregiver responsibilities for his mother.

Land Management Supervisor's Report (Bill Neilan):

Bill had no updates.

Newsletter Editor's Report (Anne Pfeiffer):

Anne did not attend. Jim Beeson said she will soon be moving to the Seattle area and will be unable to continue as newsletter editor. Anne plans to complete the summer edition of the Blazer before she leaves.

RATC History (Diana Christopulos):

Diana gave a fascinating report on the history of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club, from the 1930s to the present. She and some Hollins University history students have unearthed and sorted through five boxes of primary source material detailing the relocation of a large section of the Appalachian Trail away from the Blue Ridge Parkway, the nine-year closure of the McAfee Knob trail in the 1970s, and the meticulous mapping out of RATC's section of the AT, among many other things. Diana said in order to preserve this history, the primary sources must be organized, digitized, placed in a permanent home, and made searchable by a metadata catalog.

- Jim Beeson commended Diana and thanked her for preserving this priceless history. He moved that an archivist position be created as an ancillary to the Board of Directors and that Diana be the archivist. The motion was seconded, and it passed. Diana agreed to temporarily assume this position.

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

Jim said the Virginia AT maintaining clubs confer each week on the pandemic and its effects on club functions. Recently, Wendy Janssen (AT superintendent) requested permission to reopen the Triple Crown section of the trail. A decision may be made the week of June 8. Many hikers are already on these trails, and continuing to keep them closed may cause resentment and bad PR for the club. Trail maintainers have requested a heads-up to do advance work before the trail officially reopens.

- Diana Christopulos commented that trailhead parking lots (especially Dragon's Tooth and McAfee Knob) are a major challenge to social distancing. Perhaps open only parts of the lots to reduce crowding.
- Susan Terwilliger asked about resuming Ridgerunner duties and what guidance will be offered to volunteers. Jim said he will check on this and report back.
- Jim also mentioned that pro bono legal services might be available to the club through an RATC member and trail maintainer who works for Gentry Locke, a prominent Roanoke law firm.

2. VA 311 Property Update - Bonfire

As noted at the May 2020 board meeting, fundraising activities to purchase the VA 311 property are currently on hold because of the pandemic. Once the AT reopens, a 21-day T-shirt sale campaign will begin. We will sell high-quality shirts through Bonfire, a Richmond company, with no upfront cost or risk to RATC. The club will receive \$10 per shirt, and all marketing details will be handled by Bonfire. Various sizes and styles will be available.

3. 2020 Annual Meeting

After some discussion, the board decided the annual membership meeting, usually held in March to elect board officers, cannot happen this year. It would be difficult to maintain social distance with a large group, and a Zoom option is not ideal. Jim said he will inform RATC members that the club will proceed with the current board until the next annual meeting in March 2021. Current financial information will be shared with members.

4. Open RATC Board Positions

Several board positions are now open: treasurer (Terri McClure), counselor (Brian Boggs), and newsletter editor (Anne Pfeiffer). The ancillary position of social chair (Scott Karns) is also open. Jim asked the board to suggest members (especially newer people) who might be interested in serving.

Calendar:

July 13	RATC board meeting (Zoom)
September TBD	Volunteer Leadership Virtual Meeting (ATC)
October 24	VA Partnership Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.