

RATC Board Meeting Minutes
August 3, 2020
Online format (through Zoom)

In Attendance:

Board members: Jim Beeson, Terri McClure, Bill Neilan, Anne Pfeiffer, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Brendle Wolfe

Others: None

Meeting was called to order by Jim Beeson at 6 p.m.

Approval of July 13 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):

In June, RATC paid its liability insurance premium. The club received \$1,900 in membership dues and \$1,500 in donations for the McAfee Knob property acquisition fund. In July, the bill for the rock drill was paid with help from ATC. Terri and Jim Beeson reported that \$13,922 has been raised for the McAfee Knob fund so far, with a pending donation of \$10,000. With the \$10,000 earlier pledged by RATC, this brings the total to around \$34,000.

- Terri also said RATC must obtain a sales and use tax exemption from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in order to solicit contributions. To this end, we must file the form Registration Statement for a Charitable Organization.

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 8/3/2020):

Total in Checking:	\$60,288.66
Total Monetary Assets:	\$75,003.56
Receipts (YTD):	\$20,515.30
Expenditures (YTD):	\$5,032.16

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

Membership Report: (Jim Beeson)

Jim mailed six new-member packets last month. RATC currently has 591 members.

Trail Supervisor's Report (Mike Vaughn):

Mike did not attend. Jim Beeson reported that recent work hikes have centered on bridge repair. A crew recently replaced railings on a bridge along the Andy Layne trail and another near Mountain Pass Road. At least three of the 53 bridges in RATC's section of the AT also need repair. Mike has requested \$6,600 from ATC license plate funds for trail maintenance items.

- Jim is working on a formula to use when requesting trail maintenance funds from ATC license plate funds. Instead of requesting money for each item, he proposes an annual allocation (straight percentage) for each Virginia club. The percentage would be calculated on the number of miles each club maintains (including shelters, privies, and non-AT access trails).

Hikemaster's Report (Bob Peckman):

Bob did not attend. There were no group hikes in July. Bob recently issued a guidance to hike leaders on how to safely resume recreational hikes.

Conservation Supervisor's Report (Butch Kelly):

Butch did not attend.

Shelter Supervisors' Report (Homer and Therese Witcher):

Homer and Therese did not attend. There were no shelter maintenance hikes in July.

McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Bill Neilan):

A few Ridgerunners are doing patrols each weekend. Bill has obtained extra PPE (gowns, gloves, face shields, and masks) for the use of McAfee Knob Task Force members. A discussion followed on hikers with dogs who do not bring enough water for their animals. A dehydrated dog was recently rescued from the top of McAfee Knob, diverting precious resources from other emergencies. How can we prevent this? Anne Pfeiffer suggested placing a poster on the kiosk just north of the trailhead. Brendle Wolfe offered to put a reminder on social media. And Ridgerunners should remind hikers with dogs to bring extra water.

Land Management Supervisor's Report (Bill Neilan):

Bill had no updates.

Newsletter Editor's Report (Anne Pfeiffer):

The summer Trail Blazer will be published August 4. It is full of engaging human interest stories, including a short piece by one of Julio Stephens's sons and an article by Diana Christopulos on RATC's early history. Jim Beeson said he has a lead on a possible new Blazer editor to replace Anne.

Updates and Action Items (Jim Beeson)**1. RATC Nonprofit/Tax-Exempt Status**

As mentioned above, Terri McClure, club treasurer, is working on submitting a sales and use tax exemption request, which allows us to raise money. The form was last renewed in 2015 and is due August 31, 2020. Approval costs \$100 initially and \$30 each year thereafter. A discussion followed on whether the cost was worth the benefit of tax-exempt status. Jim said most AT maintaining clubs do not file for this status. It was decided that the benefits are worth the costs, especially if we want to continue to solicit funds.

2. Volunteer Service Agreements

Jim said Volunteer Service Agreements with partner organizations (e.g., National Park Service) are now in place.

3. COVID-19 Update

We are still in Phase 3 of reopening, and the same guidelines apply as last month. Jim noted there will most likely be no December holiday potluck this year because of the pandemic.

4. VA 311 Property Update – Bonfire

Jim said 110 T-shirts have been sold so far (raising \$1,400) through the Bonfire fundraising campaign to benefit the VA 311 property purchase. This translates to 87 customers, many of whom added a donation to their shirt purchase. Jim is very pleased with the early success of this campaign and asked board members to buy a shirt and widely advertise it on social media, with hiking groups, and through other resources.

- Jim said it's possible that ATC/RATC will initially buy just the house and 1 acre of the 7-acre tract, purchasing the remaining 6 acres when more funds are available. Andrew Downs (ATC) is pursuing this.

5. Open RATC Board Positions

Jim mentioned Jill Pennington as a possible webmaster, replacing Jonathan Eagle. Jim requested that names of possible new board members and ancillaries (for treasurer, counselor, newsletter editor, membership coordinator, social chair, and webmaster) be forwarded to him.

6. Fundraising Committee

Brendle Wolfe and Julio Stephens have agreed to serve on the fundraising committee. As described in last month's minutes, this committee will come up with some fundraising strategies to help ensure the long-term financial security of the club.

7. Great American Outdoors Act

This act, which will help fund deferred maintenance costs throughout the National Park Service system, was passed by Congress and will likely be signed by President Trump. Much of the funding comes from fossil fuel company fees.

Calendar:

September 14	RATC board meeting (Zoom)
September TBD	ATC Volunteer Leadership Virtual Meeting
October 24	VA Partnership Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.