

**RATC Board Meeting Minutes**  
December 7, 2020  
Online format (through Zoom)

**In Attendance:**

Board members: Jim Beeson, Andrew Bowman, Mark Farrell, Terri McClure, Bill Neilan, Julio Stephens, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher, Brendle Wolfe

Others: Jill Pennington

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

**Approval of November 2 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):**

RATC recently received \$6,640 from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) license plate fund, to be used for trail maintenance. Terri said the club has sent a check for \$43,933 to ATC for the McAfee Knob land purchase. Of this amount, \$10,000 came from the Demaree fund originally granted to the club in 2017.

- Terri noted that Jim Beeson's earlier message reminding RATC members to pay their dues has resulted in 40 recent payments. She also reminded board members to review the proposed 2021 RATC budget and be ready to discuss it at the January 4 meeting. Terri said all grant money received would be visible and transparent in the budget.

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 12/7/2020):

Total in Checking:	\$84,615.86
Total Monetary Assets:	\$99,526.91
Receipts (YTD):	\$8,749.98
Expenditures (YTD):	\$12,960.54

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

**Membership Report (Mark Farrell):**

RATC currently has 637 members, including 14 who joined in November. Mark said 129 members owe unpaid dues, including some who are a year behind. Jim Beeson and Mark discussed the need to follow up periodically, with an eventual option of dropping unpaid members from the club.

- Mark said a recent social media post about work hikes on Dragon's Tooth logged 20,000 views; another post showing work crews on Tinker Mountain had 14,000 views. He said these posts have helped recruit new trail maintainers.

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

Mike did not attend. Trail maintenance crews have been working in recent weeks on Tinker Mountain, between the Daleville Park and Ride and Hayrock. They also plan to repair a bridge on the Andy Layne trail.

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

Bob did not attend.

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

Butch did not attend and has no updates.

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

Homer and Therese fixed the privy door at Jenny Knob shelter in November. Kathryn Herndon-Powell (ATC) recently sent an email to the trail-maintaining clubs about whether the privies should be officially reopened. RATC replied that both shelters and privies should be reopened: many hikers are already using them, with the understanding that they are not sanitized by the maintaining clubs and must be used at the hikers' own risk.

**McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Bill Neilan):**

The McAfee Knob Task Force season has officially ended, and Dave Youmans (Catawba Valley Ridgerunner) has left for the year.

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

Bill began work in November monitoring the trail corridor in parts of RATC's section, together with two ATC colleagues. This job, which sometimes requires bushwhacking into remote spots, usually involves a three-person team. Bill has asked Kevin Moore, an active RATC member, to join the land management team as supervisor.

**Newsletter Editor's Report (Ron Bradbury):**

Ron did not attend. The fall 2020 Trail Blazer was published on November 8. Quarterly issues are published in January, April, July, and October.

**Updates and Action Items (Jim Beeson)**

**1. VA 311 Property Update**

As mentioned in the treasurer's report, RATC has contributed nearly \$44,000 toward the McAfee Knob land purchase – one-third of the total price. Closing will be December 15. Jim said after the house is razed, it will be important to ready the property to allow parking. If progress is not made in a timely manner, ad hoc parking by the public could result. Jim and Bill Neilan are working with Andrew Downs (ATC) to improve the property and ready it for its eventual transfer to the National Park Service. This effort will overlap with VDOT's pedestrian bridge project over VA 311.

**2. New McAfee Knob Property Information**

Jim and Bill Neilan recently accompanied Andrew Downs and Conner McBane (ATC) to view a 390-acre tract acquired through the Conservation Fund. This property, off VA 779 and accessible by a rough road with two creek crossings, has a cabin that will become available after the sale closes on December 15. Jim asked the board's opinion on whether RATC should look into acquiring the cabin for possible rental to the public.

- A discussion followed on the feasibility of this proposal. The cabin is currently in poor shape and would need considerable repair. It is also difficult to reach by vehicle. Therese Witcher said years ago, RATC owned and rented out a cabin but quit doing so because of liability concerns.
- Jim pointed out that cabin rental could be a source of income for the club. Terri McClure suggested talking to Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club (TATC) and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) members, since both those clubs have cabin rental experience. Jim will ask a TATC or PATC member to attend the January 4 board meeting to answer questions.
- The board agreed to take the next step – fact finding – and explore the feasibility of renting the cabin. Jim will take interested board members to visit the cabin within the next two weeks.

**3. Club Funding Sources**

Jim mentioned several funding streams available to RATC: T-shirt sales, Roanoke Valley Gives, ATC license plate proceeds, and the Amazon Smile program. The LL Bean grant program has ended. Kroger also has a charity program we might consider. Jim emphasized the importance of recognizing and recording all funding sources.

**Calendar:**

December 15: McAfee Knob Trailhead Property Closing  
January 4, 2021 RATC board meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.