

RATC Board Meeting Minutes

January 4, 2021

Online format (through Zoom)

In Attendance:

Board members: Jim Beeson, Andrew Bowman, Ron Bradbury, Mark Farrell, Terri McClure, Bill Neilan, Bob Peckman, Julio Stephens, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Mike Vaughn

Others: Robert Adkisson, Rosanne Cary, Greg Hodges, Ned Kuhns (all of the Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club); John Kelly, Wendy Kelly, Jill Pennington

Meeting was called to order by Jim Beeson at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of December 7 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 has tentatively budgeted ~ \$8,860 for 2021 pending board approval. Last year we spent less than the ~ \$10,000 budgeted because of no social gatherings, few in-person board meetings, and other changes resulting from COVID-19. The biggest expense was payment of ~ \$44,000 to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) for the McAfee Knob land purchase. We received \$8,700 in grant funds.

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 1/4/2021):

Total in Checking:	\$44,597.75
Total Monetary Assets:	\$59,331.92
Receipts (YTD):	\$13,222.36
Expenditures (YTD):	\$13,500.09

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

Membership Report (Mark Farrell):

Mark requested \$600 in 2021 for membership-related expenses. RATC currently has 648 members, including 13 who joined in December. About 124 members have not renewed their membership, including some who are unpaid since 2019. Mark will follow up with members in arrears with periodic reminders. Bill Neilan said there are 1,800 participants on the RATC Meetup site.

Trail Supervisor's Report (Mike Vaughn):

Trail maintenance crews have worked on Tinker Mountain for the past six weeks. So far, they have installed 79 new steps. Six more work hikes are planned for this area; then, around the end of February, the crews will move to the McAfee Knob trail for five or six days.

Hikemaster's Report (Bob Peckman):

Bob requested \$100 in 2021 for group hike-related expenses. After March, few group hikes were held in 2020.

Conservation Supervisor's Report (Butch Kelly):

Butch did not attend.

Shelter Supervisors' Report (Homer and Therese Witcher):

Homer and Therese did not attend. Jim Beeson reiterated RATC's position that shelters and privies, still officially closed, should be reopened. Bob Peckman remarked that COVID transmission was not likely to be a problem in these facilities.

McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Bill Neilan):

No current activity.

Land Management Supervisor's Report (Bill Neilan):

Bill has asked Kevin Moore, a prospective land management supervisor, to join him and some ATC colleagues on an upcoming trail corridor monitoring trip.

Newsletter Editor's Report (Ron Bradbury):

Ron said the next edition of the Trail Blazer will be published in mid-January. He needs submissions (text and pictures) before January 15. Jim Beeson plans to submit a "Year in Review" article.

Updates and Action Items (Jim Beeson)

1. Dowd Property Cabin – Discussion/Tidewater AT Club

Four members of the Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club (TATC), Bob Adkisson, Rosanne Carey, Greg Hodges, and Ned Kuhns, led an informative and detailed discussion with the RATC board about TATC's cabin and how it is managed.

- This cabin was built by club members in the late 1970s and was made available for rental use in 1983. TATC's rental fees are fairly low – \$7 per person per night – and are intended just to cover upkeep and other cabin expenses. Biggest yearly expenses are liability insurance and maintenance. The cabin sits on 15 acres of land owned by the club. TATC supplies lanterns, axes, a wood-burning stove, and a fully equipped kitchen. The cabin sleeps 12 people.
- Greg said only TATC members can rent the cabin, although they can bring nonclub members as guests. Prospective renters must qualify in advance by going on a weekend maintenance/orientation hike, during which they do some cabin upkeep and learn the cabin rules and procedures. The TATC cabin has tight security to keep out intruders: thick doors with bolts and bolted windows and screens. Unlike a shelter, it is not open to the public: only to renters and maintenance crews. The cabin is used about one-third of the year, mostly on weekends. About 10% to 15% of TATC members use it.
- Rosanne, TATC president, said it is essential to have dedicated people – preferably a team – to manage the cabin and its rentals. Bob and Greg are co-chairs of the club's cabin committee and handle most cabin-related matters. They invited interested RATC members to visit their cabin and may want to visit the Dowd cabin.
- The Dowd property cabin sits on land acquired through the Conservation Fund and is about midway between McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs. It sleeps six to seven people on metal frames. The Dowd cabin is owned by ATC but would be managed by RATC. The board discussed how this ownership/management structure may impact RATC's need for liability insurance on the cabin and for repairs/maintenance. Terri McClure said it's important to make sure the cabin does not become a money pit. Ned agreed that costs – especially renovation costs – are important to gauge in advance. Jim Beeson said he sees cabin rental as a revenue stream, not a break-even proposition. He also plans to consult members of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club about its cabin management experience. Bill Neilan said he thinks a cabin rental program is worth pursuing, and the board agreed. The next step is to seek ATC approval of RATC's plan to manage the cabin. Then, we can arrange an inspection to determine the costs of making basic repairs to the cabin.

2. Finalize 2021 Budget

Terri McClure, club treasurer, said she will send out a 2021 budget to board members for final approval this week.

3. McAfee Property Information

The McAfee Knob land purchase transaction closed on December 17. Jim emphasized that RATC must advocate for the improvement of this property, starting with better parking for hikers. Andrew Downs (ATC) is currently looking at several other properties to purchase with Mountain Valley Pipeline funds.

4. 2021 RATC Annual Meeting – Officer/Board Election

The board discussed how best to handle the upcoming March annual meeting. Because of the COVID pandemic, it cannot be held in person. Jim will put out a slate of RATC Board of Directors candidates and send it to the club membership for approval. Various ways of meeting remotely were discussed. John Kelly, a new member, said he can put together Zoom capability for around 50 people. Andrew Bowman offered two other possibilities: GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar. Both of these tools allow functions similar to Zoom. John, Andrew, and Jim will confer and decide which to use by the February board meeting.

Calendar:

February 8 (6 pm): RATC board meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.