

RATC Board Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2021

Online format (through Zoom)

In Attendance:

Board members: Ron Bradbury, Mark Farrell, Bill Neilan, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher

Others: Jill Pennington

Meeting was called to order by President Bill Neilan at 6:10 p.m.

Approval of February 8 Board Meeting Minutes (Susan Terwilliger):

Corrections: None

Approval of March 10 Annual 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 did not attend. Bill Neilan reported that RATC raised \$3,400 from Roanoke Valley Gives on March 10. The club received \$4,400 from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) license plate fund to pay for chainsaws to fix the Andy Layne bridge. We also received a \$239 refund for bulk mail postage.

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 4/12/2021):

Total in Checking:	\$55,735.53
Total Monetary Assets:	\$70,450.67
Receipts (YTD):	\$8,907.64
Expenditures (YTD):	\$1,781.00

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

Membership Report (Mark Farrell):

RATC has 703 total members, with 21 new members joining in March. However, around 112 members owe past dues, dating back as far as 2019. Mark said new member patches are not yet available through Press Press Merch, and he is seeking other bids. Social media posts continue to generate many views.

Trail Supervisor's Report (Mike Vaughn):

Mike did not attend. Recent work hikes have been on the Andy Layne trail; in Giles County, near John's Creek; near Mountain Lake; and on Pearis Mountain. Many blowdowns have been cleared in the Angels Rest and Mountain Lake areas with the help of a battery-powered chainsaw. The target date to open the 15 miles of closed AT (between Clendennin Road near Pearisburg and Pine Swamp Branch shelter) is around April 15. Upcoming work hikes will be on Sawtooth Ridge, south of the McAfee Knob parking lot.

Hikemaster's Report (Jennifer Frye):

Jennifer did not attend. Recreational hikes are being scheduled again, with two occurring in April.

Conservation Supervisor's Report (Butch Kelly):

Butch did not attend.

Shelter Supervisors' Report (Homer and Therese Witcher):

Homer and Therese have checked all 16 shelters. The picnic table at Pine Swamp Branch has been replaced. The asphalt shingle roofs on the privies have been replaced with metal roofs at Campbell, Catawba, John's Spring, and Pickle Branch shelters. The privy has been moved at War Spur shelter. Major improvements are planned for the Wapiti shelter during the weekend of April 23-25. Plans are to bring in eight new logs and remove the asphalt shingles from the shelter and privy, install a new metal roof on both shelter and privy, and stain the shelter. A generator, jacks, a four-wheeler, and a trailer will be required for this project.

- Therese also requested money (from the license plate fund) to buy 100 oak seedlings to plant in a grass lot near Daleville (at the site of the old Arney House). Mike Vaughn to approve funding request.

McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Dee Case):

Dee did not attend. She is the new McAfee Knob Task Force liaison. The new Catawba Valley Ridgerunner is Suzanne Neal, who begins work April 19. A virtual training day for new Ridgerunners is scheduled for April 24.

Land Management Supervisor's Report (Kevin Moore):

Kevin did not attend. He and several ATC staffers completed some boundary work last winter and will schedule more work hikes this fall and winter.

Newsletter Editor's Report (Ron Bradbury):

The 2021 spring edition of the Trail Blazer will be published in mid-April. Ron asked whether the paper version of the Blazer could be printed in color. Bill Neilan and Therese Witcher responded that since color images are available online, the extra cost for color hard copies is not warranted. We are moving away from paper copies as much as possible. Ron encouraged members to submit articles, short or long, and high-resolution images (at least 300 pixels per inch).

Updates and Action Items (Bill Neilan)

1. Roanoke Valley Gives – March 10, 2021

As mentioned in the treasurer's report, RATC received \$3,400 in donations through this fundraiser, facilitated by Brendle Wolfe.

2. Pedestrian Bridge over Route 311

This project is moving along very quickly. Bill reported that the target (not confirmed) date to open the new bridge is August 2023. In the meantime, Bill and other RATC leaders are working with VDOT and other authorities to locate where the AT will continue across VA 311 on the northbound side. As a contingency measure, we may need an access stairway to direct hikers to the bridge and keep them off the highway. Once the new section of trail is open, the old section will need to be closed promptly.

3. Privies Returning to McAfee Knob Parking Lot

The two porta-johns in the parking lot are returning soon (no fixed date yet). Bill said ATC paid to remove them and should pay to reinstall them. The board agreed that RATC should not have to bear financial responsibility for these facilities.

4. Dowd Cabin

Some board members visited the cabin on February 16. Andrew Downs (ATC) met us there and walked us through the cabin, discussing its history and the prospects for turning it into a rental property. Andrew recently walked through the cabin with a volunteer contractor who advised what updates and repairs may be needed. At this point,

RATC is not yet committed to the cabin project pending more information about the cabin's soundness and general condition.

5. Other Updates

- The house next to the McAfee Knob parking lot, scheduled by ATC to be razed this spring, is still standing. Bill said he will ask Andrew Downs about when this will happen.
- Jill Pennington, webmaster, has updated the RATC website and fixed some broken links.
- Bill asked the board's opinion about whether to include links to two hiker resource websites on the RATC website. One is general hiking tips and resources and the other is a collection of hiking safety resources. However, both sites contain solicitations for money or donations. The board decided against including these links.

Calendar:

May 3: RATC board meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.