

RATC Board Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2021
Glenvar Branch Library, 3917 Daugherty Road

In Attendance:

Board members: Andrew Bowman, Ron Bradbury, Dee Case, Terri McClure, Bill Neilan, Susan Terwilliger, Jason Thompson, Homer Witcher, Therese Witcher

Others: Bob Peckman

Meeting was called to order by President Bill Neilan at 6:05 p.m.

Approval of October 4 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 took in around \$1,600 at this year's GO Fest: \$350 in memberships, \$850 in merchandise sales, and \$480 in contributions. Mike Vaughn spent \$6,300 for trail maintenance tools from National Park Service funds. Terri said life members make up 20% of RATC. She also noted that many members with lapsed dues have responded to Bill Neilan's recent reminders.

Financial activity since last board meeting (as of 11/8/2021):

| | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Total in Checking: | \$50,474.25 |
| Total Monetary Assets: | \$66,122.99 |
| Receipts (YTD): | \$15,771.84 |
| Expenditures (YTD): | \$9,373.05 |

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

Membership Report (Mark Farrell):

Mark did not attend. He is stepping down from his role as membership coordinator. RATC currently has 673 members. A new vendor is being sought for lifetime member patches.

Trail Supervisor's Report (Mike Vaughn):

Mike did not attend. Work hikes continued on the McAfee Knob trail in October, with a focus on replacing rock bridges.

Hikemaster's Report (Jennifer Frye):

Jennifer did not attend. Dee Case said hike leader training will occur on November 20. Dee also recommended the book "Exploring the Appalachian Trail: Hikes in the Virginias" as a great resource for hikers with a variety of practical information.

Conservation Supervisor's Report (Butch Kelly):

Butch did not attend.

Shelter Supervisors' Report (Homer and Therese Witcher):

Homer and Therese reported that the shelters in our area are generally in good shape. The Bailey Gap privy needs a new roof but all other shelters and privies in our section are up to date.

McAfee Knob Task Force Report (Dee Case):

Dee said the season-end McAfee Knob Task Force (MKTf) meeting and social was held November 7. A lunch to honor departing Catawba Mountain Ridgerunner Suzanne Neal will be on November 10. A great deal of trash has been left on the Triple Crown trails this fall, especially around McAfee Knob. Foot traffic has increased exponentially. For comparison, 201 gallons of trash were removed in 2020; 366 gallons were taken out this year. There were also many more volunteer hours and patrols this year than last year. Tinker Cliffs was officially covered for first time in 2021 as a MKTF patrol.

Land Management Supervisor's Report (open):

Kevin Moore has resigned as land management supervisor. No current report.

Newsletter Editor's Report (Ron Bradbury):

The Trail Blazer was published November 1. Ron said he urgently needs more material before the next issue in January. RATC board members are asked to submit stories, images, and other items of interest.

Updates and Action Items (Bill Neilan):

1. Hiker Happy Hour at Parkway Brewing Company

The next happy hour will be November 17, 5 p.m. – 7 p.m., at Parkway Brewing Company. Winter gatherings may need to be held elsewhere owing to poor acoustics inside Parkway.

2. GO Fest:

GO Fest, on October 15-17, was a huge success for RATC. Owing to a cold snap, 30 long-sleeved T-shirts were sold as well as some hats. New and renewing memberships plus contributions brought the total to \$1,600 earned during the festival weekend. This year, RATC had its own booth without ATC staff.

3. Merchandise

See GO Fest above. Bonfire T-shirts remain popular, and Press Press Merch sells some RATC items.

4. ATC's Code of Conduct Discussion

On October 24, President Bill Neilan shared with the board a draft A.T. Network Code of Conduct. This document was originally presented at an earlier Regional Partnership Committee meeting. All board members were required to read it and report to Bill that they had done so.

- Bill did some research on the proposed Code of Conduct and consulted a lawyer. He found that signing onto this code would require purchasing more insurance and had other legal consequences.
- The question arose whether RATC is required to sign onto the A.T. Network Code of Conduct. Andrew Downs (ATC) clarified that we are not. Other clubs in Virginia also have reservations about the code and its implications.
- We decided not to sign onto the code and to handle any problems and grievances on a case-by-case basis using the citizenship requirements stated on the RATC membership brochure as a standard:
 - Support the objectives of the RATC
 - Abide by the rules of the national and state parks and forests
 - Respect the interests of the owner when on private property
 - Keep trails and woodlands free of litter
 - Abide by the instructions of the leader on group hikes and trips

5. Open Board Positions

Several board members are stepping down: Jim Beeson (vice president), Mark Farrell (membership coordinator), Kevin Moore (land management supervisor), and Terri McClure (treasurer). We may need a nominating committee to fill these positions. Any club members interested in filling one of these roles should contact Bill Neilan.

6. Dowd Property Cabin

Bill explained that the cabin project is temporarily on hold, owing to ownership questions.

7. 311 Pedestrian Bridge

Construction of the pedestrian bridge across Route 311 at the McAfee Knob trailhead will begin in August 2023. The house just off the parking lot is coming down shortly. Many questions remain on parking, restroom facilities, and other amenities.

8. Hiker Shuttle

A prototype hiker shuttle, serving the Exit 140 park-and-ride to the McAfee Knob parking lot, will begin in April 2022. It will be in a trial phase for a year before the pedestrian bridge is built. The shuttle will require a fee and will leave from the park-and-ride on weekends from 7 a.m. to noon. Many questions remain, including size of the bus and how to serve those who want to ride but can't be accommodated if the bus is full.

9. RATC Holiday Party

Bill announced that because of continuing concerns with COVID, there will be no December holiday gathering this year.

Calendar:

December 6: RATC board meeting at Glenvar branch library

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.