

Scranton Pocono Amateur Radio "Klub"
Minutes of Meeting
01-19-2021

Pledge of Allegiance

Due to the Corona Virus epidemic we communicated via zoom and telephone from our own homes and did the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introduction of Guests

There were no guests.

News of Members

There was no news of members.

Members in attendance

There were 8 members present.

1. Tom Davis (N3XMB)
2. Jeff Jones (ND3Z)
3. Heath Goldstein (K3HGG)
4. John Walsh (N3URF)
5. Bill Leggat (WA3LLF)
6. Peter Marcano (KC3POC)
7. Ron Lister (W3RAL)
8. Nick Shyshuck (N3GTH)

Reports

Secretary's Report - John (N3URF) – This month we dispensed with the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, (11-17-2020), and instead sent them out via email. This allowed all members to review them and to bring up points needing correction (if any) before or during the meeting and then to approve them. Ron (W3RAL) moved to approve the minutes, Jeff (ND3Z) seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report - Heath (K3HGG) – at the last meeting (11-17-2020) he reported the following: The current balance is \$1,060.46 and the current activity was as follows: *** Note – the current activity listed below totals up to \$1,060.46 ***

Beginning Balance	\$980.20
Savings	\$5.01
Petty Cash	\$50.25
Dues not deposited	\$25.00

Total	\$1,060.46

Heath (K3HGG) asked Nick (N3GTH) how much he owes him for the filter. Nick

said that the total bill was \$45 and \$25 is going for his dues so that Heath (K3HGG) owes Nick (N3GTH) \$20. Tom (N3XMB) asked Heath (K3HGG) to send Nick (N3GTH) and Tom (N3XMB) an email confirming that Nick's dues are paid.

VE Session Report – Jeff (ND3Z) said they had a VE testing meeting Saturday (01-16-2021) at the Chinchilla Hose Company. Five (5) applicants showed up but one (1) of them tested twice and failed both times so he had to submit a report that he had six (6) applicants. Everyone wore masks and did social distancing, sat at separate tables, and it worked out pretty well. The result was that we got three (3) new Technicians and one (1) upgraded to General.

Tom (N3XMB) said that he sent an email to Heath (K3HGG) asking him if he could get with the Chinchilla Hose Company and see if we could schedule in VE sessions every second Saturday of each month for the next three months as long as we have applicants that want to come in to test. If we don't have applicants we won't show up, just like we do with our own testing.

He also asked Heath (K3HGG) to find out if we could use the Chinchilla Fire Hall for our meetings, at least until the Public Safety building is open to the public, and whether they would charge us for it. Heath (K3HGG) said he hasn't done that but that he will ask and will get back to Tom (N3XMB) because he is not sure of their charging policy for non profits using their hall.

Repeater Report – Ron (W3RAL) reported that we received the new filter and went up to the site and installed it. At the same time they replaced a long coax between the filter and the junction box outside of the main building with a larger coax hard line and it seemed to improve the signal a little bit.

Other than that Ron (W3RAL) said we are just dealing with our Phantom user who gets on there a lot in the middle of the night and keeps asking for someone to help him get his license. He seems to be just trying to bait somebody to talk to him. He obviously is not licensed because he imitates a lot of high and low tones going beep, beep, beep, beep, beep. Hopefully he will disappear or go back to school when the Covid-19 situation is over. We think it's the same guy who went to college several years ago but now he has been back about a year and one half due to the Covid with nothing else to do.

Nick (N3GTH) said that the repeater is working better than the 715 right now.

News from ARRL – Test Sessions and FRNs (QST, January 2021, Page 73, Maria Somma, AB1FM)

“...The FCC has indicated VEC organizations and their VE teams should discontinue the practice of accepting Social Security numbers at exam sessions. Examinees should register in the FCC Commission Registration System (CORES) and receive a Federal

Registration Number (FRN) before exam day...”

“...The FCC also advised VE teams to make it clear to candidates that some information about them will be made publicly available on the FCC’s website, including their name, mailing address, and felony conviction status...”

“...We urge our VE teams to change procedures before the FCC turns off the Social Security number auto-registration feature. Otherwise, this could cause a delay in processing applications to the FCC later. Examinees can be directed to this information on our website, at www.arrl.org/what-to-bring-to-an-exam-session (see item 4), or directly to the FCC website, at www.arrl.org/fcc-licensee-privacy. To register on the FCC CORES site, visit *** Note *** Incorrect address ---→ <https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userlogin.do> . “ ←-- *** Note: incorrect address*** ...”

Dayton Hamvention® Cancels 2021 Show – 01/11/2021

Dayton Hamvention® will not take place for the second year.

“...Unfortunately, several setbacks in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic make necessary the difficult decision to cancel Hamvention® 2021...” a January 11 announcement from the Hamvention® Executive Committee said. Sponsored by the Dayton Amateur Radio Association (**DARA**). Hamvention® was set to take place May 21 – 23 in Xenia, Ohio.

New Amateur VLF Transatlantic Record Set – 01/11/21

Very low frequency (VLF) user enthusiast Joe Craig, VO1NA, reports that Stefan Schaefer, DK7FC, copied his 50-character message transmitted from Newfoundland on 8.271 kHz, with a radiated power of 10mW.

FCC Invites Comments on expanding the Number of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators – 01/08/2021

In a January 5 **Public Notice**, the FCC requested comments on whether the current 14 Volunteer Examiners (VEs) in administering amateur radio examinations, or whether up to five additional VECs should be authorized. The ARRL VEC is the largest of the 14 VECs in the US. Comments are due by February 5, and reply comments are due by February 19. After Congress authorized it to do so, the FCC adopted rules in 1983 to allow volunteers to prepare and administer amateur radio examinations, and it established the system of VECs and VEs.

Ron (W3RAL) said that he didn’t see any reason to expand. He said that he has never had any trouble with the ARRL VEC.

Jeff (ND3Z) said that the ARRL probably handles about 95% of the testing. He said that originally we had three different guys running the tests and we went with three different testing organizations. We decided, however, to go with ARRL because the ARRL had

good test materials, answer keys, and everything was printed up nice so that's where we stayed. Jeff (ND3Z) doesn't think they probably need more VECs.

Ron (W3RAL) asked if each VEC uses different materials.

Tom (N3XMB) said that all of the VECs have the same pool of questions. The difference is how the tests are administered. Some of the VECs don't charge but he understands that they really don't have any materials that they provide. He said he is not sure if he is correct but the big difference with the VECs is the quality of the materials that they provide.

Ron (W3RAL) said that unless the ARRL VEC office is so overwhelmed that he can't see any reason to expand the VECs.

Tom (N3XMB) said that they charge \$15 for each exam so that if they do get overwhelmed they should be able to afford to bring someone in part time. He said that from what he sees applicants are getting their licenses between 7 to 10 days at the maximum so he doesn't see where the ARRL is being overwhelmed.

He also added that the ARRL has a process where you can do everything electronically. You don't even have to mail the materials in. He said that Jeff or Ron would have to call ARRL to get the specifics on that.

Ron (W3RAL) said he is going to volunteer to call ARRL soon and speak to the people in the VEC office and see what their thoughts are on expansion.

Bill (WA3LLF) asked how many hams there are in the United States. Ron (W3RAL) found out on line that there are over 700,000 hams in the United States. Bill (WA3LLF) thought that the \$35 that is charged to upgrade your license every 10 years so that approximately 70,000 amateurs renewing annually at \$35 each amounts to \$2,450,000 which is a nice sum of money to be paid to the FCC annually. Tom (N3XMB) said that the \$35 fee hasn't been enacted yet. However, if it does get approved, it will be the same fee for the following:

- 1.Applications, 2.Renewals, 3. Requests for modifications of your license such as going from Tech to General, and General to Amateur Extra, 4.Vanity call signs and anything that would require you to send an application into the FCC.

Ron (W3RAL) said that vanity call signs used to be \$20 and then they were free. He asked if this meant that they will start charging for vanity signs again. Tom (N3XMB) said yes, there would be a charge for anything that would require you to send an application to the FCC. An exception would be something you could do online such as an address change.

Tom (N3XMB) continued by saying that the FCC has approved the \$35 proposal, then it

has to be published in the Federal Registers, Congress has the requirement to look over it, and approve it or shoot it down. If Congress approves it then it has to go through public commentary and then it can become final. The club members said it seems like a done deal. However, Tom (N3XMB) said that an optimistic view would be that Congress could say that since Ham Radio is not a commercial enterprise that it should not have to be charged those fees. He said that we do not know what will happen in the months ahead on the \$35 fee.

QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo Returning in March – 01/05/2021

The **QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo** will return March 13 -14 for a full 48 hours, QSO Today host Eric Guth 4Z1UG/WA6IGR announced this week. ARRL is a QSO Today Expo partner. Guth said the inaugural QSO Today Expo last August attracted more than 16,000 attendees, and he anticipates that the March 2021 event will be even more successful.

The upcoming QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo will feature new speakers and presenters, panel discussions and kit-building workshops among other activities. Guth pointed out that attendees can log in from anywhere. While he anticipates a good turnout by those who typically attend such ham radio events, the virtual Expo also offers an opportunity for those concerned about pandemic travel restrictions as well as for those who don't typically attend in-person events.

Old Business:

Zoom Calls: Tom (N3XMB) said we will continue with the Zoom Conference call meetings until further notice. This is necessitated due to the continuing Covid-19 situation.

Christmas Party: We had a Christmas party 12-15-2021 on line via Zoom this year because of the Covid-19 situation. It was enjoyed by all who attended. Since it was a party we dispensed with taking the minutes.

New Business:

Elections: Tom (N3XMB) said that election time is coming to select officers for the year (2021). He said that he filled the President's position for the past two years which is the maximum allowed for one continuous term according to the club's constitution so think about who you would like to nominate in all of the officer positions.

Heath (K3HGG) suggested that under the circumstances since we don't know when we might be able to meet as a group in person because of the Covid-19 situation that we just postpone the election until next year at election time. Heath (K3HGG) moved that we do this, Ron (W3RAL) seconded it and the motion passed unanimously.

Club Dues

Club dues are \$25 per year payable to SPARK.

Tom (N3XMB) suggested that members mail their dues into the club post office box and he will try to collect them and send receipts out and email a response back to everyone. He said to put your email address in with the dues payment. The mailing address for the club is:

SPARK
PO Box 20206
Scranton, PA 18502

Basic Corner:

Tom (N3XMB) had a question for those wanting to move up from the Technician to a General license. For those interested would they want a "General in a Day" program or a multi "Lets dig into the questions" session?

Tom (N3XMB) said that either way it would require a commitment on everyone's part to participate. Time wise, to do a one day event, it would probably be 5-6 hours or so of study with testing beginning an hour after the study session completes. For a multi-session event he estimates that we could easily double or triple the time for the one day event. He is considering doing the training via video conference, followed by in person testing in late afternoon of the same day, or on the following day.

We had a lively discussion on this. Nick (N3GTH) emphasized that a one day cram session is good but it should be preceded by a couple of months of at home study as well by using the ARRL book or "Hamtestonline", or other options. He thinks that you would need to have classes over a period of a couple of months for the information to sink in. He added that Bill Jones, some years ago, gave a cram and jam session for 11 applicants who took the Amateur Extra exam. The 10 applicants who passed coupled home study with the cram and jam course while the one who did not pass did not do home study, they took only the cram and jam course.

Tom (N3XMB) suggested that applicants download the FCC rules for amateurs. He gave a link where we could access them which is "<https://www.ecfr.gov>" He said that you can download the rules that are current as of the day you download them as opposed to getting a book of rules that might be currently out of date. He also gave these helpful instructions as follows:

1. Under "Browse" select "Title 47 –Telecommunication".
2. In the table click on "80-199".
3. Scroll down and click on "97".
4. On the final page, you can scroll down to read any desired paragraph in

part 97 – AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE.

Program:

No program input.

Upcoming Special events stations (per ARRL website):

- 27 Special Events stations
 - o From Today through 30 April 2021

01/23/2021 – 1st Annual Lone Star Frozen POTA Event
Jan 23, 1700Z-2100Z, various, TX. Deep East Texas Amateur Radio Club Inc.. all modes, all bands. QSL. Dayton Jones, KG5TKF. Email or see website for,, information. www.parksontheair.com or kg5tkg.radio@gmail.com.

02/06/2021 – Ground Hog Day Special Event
Feb 6, 0900Z-1500Z, K3HWJ, Punxsutawney, PA, Punxsutawney Amateur Radio Club. All modes, all bands. Certificate. Stephen Waltman, KB3FPN, 37 Clark St., Brookville, PA 15825. SASE for certificate. www.punxclub.com

03/14/2021 – PI Day – David Sarnoff Radio Club, Princeton, NJ.
Mar 14, 0000Z-2359Z, N2RE, Princeton, NJ. David Sarnoff Radio Club. 14.250 14.050 7.200 7.050. QSL. Bob Uhrik, 104 Knoll Way, Rocky Hill, NJ 08553. Famous Princetonian Albert Einstein was born on PI Day. n2re.org

04/10/2021 – USS Midway Museum Ship Special Event: Dolittle Raid
Apr 10, 1600Z-2300Z, NI6IW, San Diego, CA. USS Midwa (CV-41) Museum Ship. 7.250 14.320 14.070 (PSK31) DSTAR via PapaSystem repeaters. QSL. USS Midway CV-41 COMEDTRA NI6IW, 910 N Harbor Dr, San Diego, CA 92101. Please include SASE. www.qrz.com/db/ni6iw

Upcoming Contests (per ARRL Contest Corral):

- 11 Listings for Jan 19-31.
- 63 listings for February
-

Upcoming Hamfests/Computerfests (per ARRL website):

CALL THE SPONSOR BEFORE YOU GO!!!

- 2 Hamfests/Conventions listed within 100 miles of 18508 (Scranton)
 - o From today through 4 July 2021
- 10 Hamfests/Computerfests listed within 250 miles of 18508 (Scranton)
 - o From today through 04 July 2021 (4 are listed as “virtual” ham-fests)

Next Club Meeting:

Tuesday, 16 February 2020, 6:30 PM on Zoom (unless otherwise noted).

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned by unanimous acclamation at

7:51pm, 10-20-2020.