

## OCRA Board Meeting Minutes – June 28, 2022

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**Board Meeting Attendees** – Bruce (N1LN), Bill (N8BR), Dan (KR4UB), Karen (KD4YJZ), Dave (W4SAR), Wilson (W4BOH), John (KX4P), Aurora (KN4VXB), and Laurie (N1YXU)

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The minutes from the May 24 OCRA Board Meeting were approved.

The minutes from the June 13 OCRA Membership Meeting were approved.

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### 2022 First Six Months

- What went well?
  - Using Zoom to allow folks to remotely participate in meetings has been a benefit as well as posting videos from the meetings to the club's YouTube channel.
  - Having a well-planned agenda for the meetings and sticking to the agenda has led to more productive discussions and presentations.
  - The meeting presentation topics for this year have been good.
- Where to improve?
  - Bringing some of the newer members and younger members into the list of presenters would broaden the responsibility for the meetings.
  - There is a real interest, especially among younger members, to learn CW. If there were an organized training that would allow participants to work together (rather than work individually with computer generated training), there could be great interest in pursuing. Perhaps having a net that meets on the repeater that uses the Morse tutors for teaching and practice would be a method for this group to meet. An ideal environment for learning would be to meet in-person to learn CW. **John and Wilson indicated they would be interested in mentoring this group.** John has a good friend, Bob Patterson, who has a club up in Charlottesville. Over the last few years, he has led a CW class which was an in-person group. **John is getting in touch with Bob to find out how these classes are being managed during COVID, possibly on Zoom.**

### 2022 Next Six Months

- Where do we go from here?
  - In terms of presentations for the remaining months in 2022, we need presentations for September, October, and November. **The result of the discussion was that John, Bill, and Sherry will meet to discuss next steps in lining-up presentations and presenters for the remainder of this year and into next year.**
  - Potential future membership meeting topics were discussed. Some of the topics included:
    - John mentioned topics that members have suggested including fundamentals of radio, basic electronics, remote operating, setting-up HF stations, and special events.
    - Bill suggested that we talk about the DX Marathon which is a great opportunity to get more involved in international radio communication. **Bill volunteered to give a**

***program on the DX Marathon. The event is in January. The suggested time of this presentation is November.***

- ***Aurora will canvas the interests of the HamPi group to determine areas that might be considered for presentations.***
- A presentation that focuses on FT8 was recommended. The presentation would include the basics of what FT8 is and how to properly set-up an FT8 station. Given the amount of information in this area, this subject could turn into a two-part presentation. ***John, Bill, and Sherry will work with Dan and Wilson (and perhaps James) to determine when this presentation would be given.***
- A presentation related to flying drones and another related to POTA (Parks on the Air) were also mentioned.

### **Christmas Party discussion**

- The first topic in this area was determining if we are going to go ahead with plans for the party. If so, we need to focus on the plans very quickly.
- We will need to work in emails and other communications between board meetings to make sure that work is getting started. We cannot wait until the next meeting to begin the discussion.
- The party would be held on Monday, December 12.
- A location for the party is the first priority and will be a main discussion topic at the July Board meeting. ***For those listed below who have taken action items to follow-up to determine the location for the party, don't wait until the July Board meeting to provide updates to the Board. When you get an answer, send an email to everyone with the information that you have.***
  - ***Wilson will contact Lad to find out who to contact at the Exchange Club in Hillsborough.***
  - ***Laurie suggested the Eno Center or Union Grove Methodist Church and will follow-up with the pastor of the church.***
  - ***Wilson suggested that we investigate the Unitarian Church near Walmart in Hillsborough.***
  - ***Bill will contact Clark at St. Mathew's regarding use of their facility.***
  - ***Dave indicated that we could have the dinner at the Baha'i Center in Efland, noting that alcohol is prohibited at that location.***
- The group recommends that we have a potluck dinner with only the main meats catered. Potluck dinners are well received by our membership and help minimize the additional out of pocket expense to attend a catered dinner.
- Jean Eddleman, Patti Bischoff, and Laurie have volunteered (well prior to the board meeting) to lead the efforts for the potluck dinner. They have ideas and suggestions for the event. For example, those who bring potluck dishes may be asked to bring copies of the recipe to share with everyone. Wilson indicated that he would be happy to cook a roast beef as one of the meats.

### **July Membership Meeting**

- At the June membership meeting and in subsequent email messages, members have been encouraged to attend the July membership meeting to get the maximum benefit from the work that Dan and Steve (W3AHL) have done and to understand potential options to ensure continuation of the OCRA repeater operation.

- There will be four basic sections of the Tri-County Repeater Analysis presentation at the July membership meeting:
  1. Background of the formation and funding of OCRA
  2. What the club has done through the years and where we are currently
  3. Activities that are going on now related to repeaters in the tri-county area (Orange, Durham, and Chatham counties)
  4. Potential options going forward and how we address them
- The fourth section (noted above) will include the focus of a decision that will need to be made at some point in the future.
- The decision revolves around the fact that OCRA members can no longer do the maintenance on the repeater and the prohibitive cost of maintenance/repair. If, or more likely when, there is an issue with our repeater, there will be significant expense for a third party to climb the tower and swap out equipment. This cost does not include expense associated with new/repairs equipment. That would be incremental cost. It is important to understand that any equipment that would be installed or swapped out would need to be built, tested, and ready for the third party to install. Tower climbers are not trained for diagnostic work. They are focused only on deinstallation and installation of equipment.
- OCRA has recurring, annual fixed expenses. The main source of income for the club is our membership dues. While we do have a modest balance in our bank account to perhaps cover third party expense and equipment cost, our annual membership dues would only cover a fraction of the cost if there were an additional issue.
- There are options that we need to consider going forward. These options will be discussed at the membership meeting.
  - If/when the repeater has an issue, we would pay for the deinstallation of the repeater and look for another location for the repeater. Other repeaters that are in our area are ground mounted rather than mounted at the top of a tower at a height over 1,000 feet. Future repeater repairs for equipment mounted at a lower level could be less expensive in many aspects.
  - Chatham County radio amateurs have teamed with the Chatham County EOC. They have developed a close working relationship built on training and mutual trust. The EOC has provided funding for the Chatham County group's repeater. Bruce and Dan are working with the director of the Chatham County EOC and the Chatham County radio amateurs to better understand the mutual relationship, required training, and funding model. This collaboration will, hopefully, lead to Bruce and Dan meeting with the director of the Orange County EOC to start rebuilding the relationship OCRA had in place years ago.
  - Depending on the outcome of discussions with the Orange County EOC director and the commitment of OCRA members to complete necessary FEMA and/or NC AUXCOMM training, we may be able to build our relationship and benefit from funding of amateur radio resources. Details of the type of training and time commitment will be developed with the Orange County EOC. Note that the Orange County EOC team may be looking around the area for places to put more towers.
- Dan and Steve will share work that they have completed to model the change in repeater access coverage if the OCRA repeater were taken down and off the air. As will be shared, there would be significant impact if this were to occur. Various types of radios (HTs, mobile radios, home-based stations) will be modeled as well to give our membership an overview of variances in coverage.

Suggestions to improve the ability to access the repeaters in our area will also be discussed. Members will be given directed to a resource to download software to use the modeling tools themselves.

- Bottom line – We will need commitment from the membership to engage with the EOC and to complete necessary training.

### **August Membership Meeting**

- The board voted to cancel the August membership meeting.
- ***Bill will follow-up with a subcommittee to meet and discuss preliminary plans for the Christmas party.***

### **Field Day Summary**

- Many folks indicated they would like to have the same format for the next Field Day. Everyone seemed to enjoy the event, especially those who are newer hams and had not participated in Field Day operations before. Conversations with newer hams indicated they feel more comfortable in terms of setting-up equipment and operating.
- Preliminary results were shared with the group. The consolidation of a master log was very smooth.
- It was agreed that a reminder would be sent to the reflector to let people, who operated from home, how to report their scores to the ARRL and which club to use on their submission.
- There were quite a few members and visitors who came through the barn to observe the activity.
- An observation was brought up that the band captains need to be accountable for setting up their own stations and ensure that they are “manned/womanned” for the event.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurie Meier, N1YXU  
OCRA Secretary