

## OCRA Board Meeting Minutes – March 26, 2024

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**Board Meeting Attendees** – Bruce (N1LN), Dan (KR4UB), Dee (KU4GC), Dave (W4SAR), Karen (KD4YJZ), Fred (KN4QBZ), Ron (KO4RON), Wilson (W4BOH), John (KX4P), and Laurie (N1YXU)

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The minutes from the OCRA February Board meeting and OCRA March Membership meeting were approved.

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### Discussion Topics:

- Upcoming Programs – John
  - It has become progressively more challenging to find topics and people who will agree to present at the membership meetings. John has sent requests to the reflector for people to respond with topics and/or as a volunteer to give a presentation. As of the time of the meeting, he had received one response.
  - The person who responded is Randy (KF4O) who indicated he has a short program (around 10 minutes) related to a ham radio clock. Since it would be a short program, it might be appropriate to combine with another meeting topic.
  - Mike Thorn (KN4ZHP) sent John a reminder email letting him know that he has two presentations he would be willing to give. John and Mike has an extensive conversation about the programs.
    - One program would be focused on MARS (Military Auxiliary Radio Service). It is a seventy five year old amateur radio service provided to the U.S. military, allowing service personnel the ability to communicate home for free. This service continues today. In emergency conditions, MARS provides amateur radio service for the military. MARS is similar to AUXCOMM in that it requires special classes and training to participate. Daily nets are conducted on specific frequencies outside the regular amateur radio bands. Mike has only been active in MARS over the last three or four years. Mike can be available later in the summer (July/August) for these programs.
    - The second program would focus on JT8CALL which is similar to the FT8 mode of operating. It provides messaging and other features which are not allowed with FT8 alone. Mike has recently discovered this mode and has become active using the mode. It could be very useful in emergency communications.
  - The April membership meeting will be focused on the “Meet the Members Night”.
    - Everyone who attends the meeting (in-person or on Zoom) will have the opportunity to give a short overview of themselves. We are planning for two to three minutes per person. This “program” would replace the time that is usually taken for introductions at the meeting.

- An email will be sent in advance to give everyone a heads-up on the focus of the meeting and also will allow folks time to figure out what they will say in the time they are allotted.
    - Laurie volunteered to check on apps that are available in Zoom that provide a visual timer to keep the meeting on-track.
    - To kick off the meeting, it was suggested that a few Board members start the program.
  - The May membership meeting will include two topics –
    - Field Day kickoff planning and overview – Dave
    - Emergency Communications Update – Who signed up for the various types of emergency communications and what are the next steps? – Fred and Bruce
  - The June membership meeting will be focused on the final Field Day planning.
  - One topic for the July meeting will be a short report out from Field Day. Mike Thorn may also present at the meeting.
- Update on the topics discussed at the February OCRA Board Meeting – All
    - Handi-Finder Build Day – Laurie
      - Aurora (KN4VXB) did an amazing job organizing the event.
      - Everyone worked together incredibly well building the kits themselves and/or helping others.
      - The consensus is that we need to have a similar event again! Thank you to Aurora for all her work in making this event a reality!
      - Thank you also to Dave for coordinating having the event at the Baha'i Center.
    - Emergency Communications Survey Results – Fred and Bruce
      - Dan put together a query that sources the results of input to the survey and summarizes who indicated interest in the various types of emergency communications areas.
      - Irrespective if folks are interested in participating in emergency communications, OCRA members were asked to review their profile and complete the survey.
      - 26 people indicated that, in some way, they are interested in participating in emergency communications. In addition, 15 people indicated they are not interested in participating in emergency communications. This means that, in total, 41 people updated their profiles. When 5 additional Board members complete their profiles, we will have responses from 46 people.
      - The 26 folks who responded with interest in emergency communication breaks down to 16 interested in AUXCOMM, 2 interested in the MOVE truck, 12 interested in CERT, 14 interested in SKYWARN, 20 for Public Service, and

17 for Net Control. Remember everyone had up to seven areas of emergency communications to add to their profiles.

- Membership Meetings – Audio/Visual Equipment Update – Dan and Wilson
  - Wilson and Dan have been working on the solution for continuing to allow our membership meetings to be recorded and also available on Zoom.
  - Many thanks to Mark (KR3AM), who was invaluable over several past months in providing the audio/visual service for meetings
  - The Zoom application was added to one of the OCRA laptops. It will be dedicated for use at the membership meetings.
  - Mark contributed the controller box (focus right) for the club's use.
  - Wilson had a couple of audio amplifiers and a speaker. With the purchase of a wireless microphone (\$32), the donation of a webcam, and the donation of a tripod to hold the webcam, the system is complete and able to run the meetings as we have been.
  - Fred has also donated a screen to the Baha'i Center and, therefore, our meetings. The screen will be installed on the ceiling in the meeting room and is retracting. Thank you, Fred!
  - Many thanks to Wilson and Dan for all their work in making sure we have a solution! Also, thanks to everyone who contributed equipment!
- DFMA Picnic/Public Outreach
  - Bob (W4FK) and Chris (NY4OU) were not able to attend the Board Meeting. They are spearheading this event.
  - Bob brought the sign-up sheet to the last OCRA meeting and also to the Handi-Finder Build Event.
- Repeater Futures (Linking/Implementation) – Dan
  - The 442.075 machine is ready to go to the site. It has been operational at Dan's house working into a dummy load and also into a linked network to burn it in and make sure everything is working. John and Dan have been to the site. The move has been coordinated with SERA.
  - The 443.475 machine is ready to go to its new site, the new tower in Chatham County.
  - These two machines have been working as a test bed to make sure everything is working correctly and ready to go. There was one minor issue. When the second linking device was ordered, it had an intermittent problem. It was returned and replaced without an issue.
  - A big thank you to everyone involved in all the work related to these repeaters!
  - After the repeaters are installed, the repeater team will turn their focus to putting policies in place for us to follow.
  - The work that has been completed will be turned into a program to be given at a future OCRA membership meeting.

- At the April BOD meeting, Bruce will share the standard list of repeaters that was agreed for Chatham County. This will be reviewed as a point of information to be shared with OCRA members.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurie Meier, N1YXU  
OCRA Secretary