

Minutes of the Business Meeting of the Forsyth Amateur Radio Club - 15 October 2018

By Jim Register (KV4SJ)
Secretary, Forsyth Amateur Radio Club

1. Call to Order and Welcome: The monthly Board of Directors Business Meeting, Forsyth Amateur Radio Club, was held on Monday, 15 October 2018 at Sixty Six Pizzeria, 3440 Frontis St, Winston Salem. The meeting was called to order by FARC President David Shoaf, K4CX, at 1922 hours, welcoming all meeting attendees.

2. Meeting Attendees: A partial list of the meeting attendees (approximately 21) is as follows: Sam Poindexter NI4TG, Jim Register KV4SJ, Dale Mierisch WB9SZL, David Shoaf KC4X, Steven Mierisch KG4JWU, Kent Englebert K4HKE, Stacey MacArthur W1LLO, Ian MacArthur W4STH, Bobby Meier AA9Au, Harlan Cobert W1HRC, Terry Good W3NPS, Gene Bowman WB4MSG, Dave McDonald N5WNB, Michael Pope K4OLD, Harold Richardson N4HER, Terry Brown AK4D, Don Edwards WS4NC, Steve Patterson WA3RTC, Ron Gregoire W4UDB, Jerry Minor K4GW, Jeff Stafford AC4YN.

3. Bylaws: Don Edwards, WS4NC, moved the club have an attorney review the bylaws and file them. Don recommended Ben Sirmons, the General Counsel of Unifi Manufacturing, who has done a number of things for him. Don estimated he would not charge more than \$250. Harold Richardson, N4HER seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. Repeater Report: Dale Mierisch, WB9SZL, gave an update on the repeater work and current status.

EchoLink: The internet is still there at the Red Cross, but they have tightened down their security and closed the ports needed for the node to work. Dale has been told that there isn't a Red Cross in the country that will open up extra ports to make it work. We can listen but not talk.

Internet: There is an opportunity to get internet on the mountain at the 145.47 site through Stokes WiFi thanks to Sam Poindexter, NI4TG, and another individual who has spoken to the principals there. We could get 1 megabyte upload and download with all ports open for \$100 per year. We would use our own router/firewall to control access. Installation is \$138.00, less if we provide our own ethernet cable. This would be for control and to support an Echolink server. The item was tabled until after we discuss other repeater items.

Yaesu Fusion repeater trade-up offer: Dale has a new application for an offer running from August through December of this year, as long as Yaesu has systems available. Dale has been on several calls and a webinar with the engineers, each lasting 1 to 1.5 hours. Dale discussed the benefits and features of the new repeater, including new information about features of the IP connectivity board. Dale has sent in the application for the \$500 upgrade version with the IP connectivity board.

145.47 Repeater Issues:

Dale Mierisch, WB9SZL, discussed the symptoms we have been hearing on the repeater, with static and crackling sounds on weak received signals, and some sounds reminiscent of interference. We thought we had a lightning strike. We found that the repeater seemed ok. The link receiver was down and had

lost its memory. Dale fixed that and we replaced a diplexer, and some of the problems went away. Dale decided to use his Comet antenna analyzer to test the SWR on the antenna, and came up with an infinite SWR.

A long discussion ensued covering the potential causes of the problem(s) and minimizing cost of identifying and resolving the issue(s), considering that a wrong guess may cost us an additional tower climb. Gene Bowman offered that he had some hardline available in case we need to replace that. Connectors would have to be procured. David reported having no luck trying to chase down a replacement wiring harness for the antenna, which, again, may or may not be part of the problem.

Treasury: Current balance is just over \$4200; \$3200 if we go ahead and spend the \$1000 for the two repeater upgrades. Worst case scenario is \$1600 for the antenna swap out, if you buy the antenna and have it ready when the tower crew is there.

How to keep this from happening again? Discussed possibilities for grounding the tower, but there is no good way to get an earth connection. Many options would require permission from the tower owners.

David McDonald, N5WNB, offered to come up on Saturday with a Bird SiteHawk (if he can get approval from his boss) and see what it tells us about the antenna and hardline.

Final outcome: Kent Englebert, K4HKE moved to authorize the technical group to spend up to \$2000 to resolve the issues with the 145.470 tower. Seconded by many and approved unanimously.

5. AUXCOMM/ARES: Harlan Cobert, W1HRC, reported on the ARES/AUXCOMM activities.

- Total of 650 hours on the air between Tour to Tanglewood and Florence.
- Average of 28 people participating.
- Used 145.47 repeater and switched to 147.315 when .47 repeater started having issues.
- Significant losses of landline phone, IP phone, and reductions in cell service had folks put on alert, preparing to provide communications for their communities.
- At an EOC meeting for Michael, Harlan W1HRC announced that AUXCOMM had 16 people ready to go mobile in the county. When he confirmed that was true, that went on the board as an asset - AUXCOMM, 16 mobile.
- Still working with the city to get a space on a city/county shared tower. County is already on board.
- EOC antennas are installed, but the dual-band antennas are less than a foot apart, and the HF antenna is surrounded by steel. County is working to get the antenna folks back in to re-install properly.

6. Adjournment of Meeting: Motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded and meeting was adjourned at 2043 hours.