

Minutes, TCARC Board Meeting continued, 17 October 2007
7:00 PM, Fire Services Institute Building, Champaign IL

Present:

Ralph Cox W9PGE, President
Mike Trautman K9MLT, Vice President
Chris Anderson W9CMA, Secretary
Milt Forsberg K9QZI, Treasurer
Al Wolfe K9SI, Director
Wayne Hamilton AB9FJ, Director

Absent:

Jeremy Lamb KC9KGJ, Director

The primary topic was the continuation of the discussion begun on October 4 regarding the K9SI repeater and whether the Club should purchase it and assume ongoing responsibility for its operation. Due to the nature of the discussion, these minutes are not necessarily arranged in order as discussed during the actual meeting. Rather, they have been reorganized to present the discussion topics in a coherent manner.

The available P25 repeater is \$2700, while a D-Star repeater is a fraction higher at around \$2860. Both systems are currently cost-prohibitive, said Milt, who also raised his concern that most Club members don't have enough knowledge about either system. He is unsure that enough of them would buy into either system to justify its expense. While not opposed to a digital repeater in the area, Milt has reservations about P25 use within the Amateur community and finds the technology behind D-Star fascinating. Wayne also raised concerns about access and support issues relative to P25, while noting that D-Star is an open system and users are encouraged to connect repeaters. Milt is against closed systems in general and is bothered by the lack of information on P25, specifically.

Al noted that the repeater which is for sale is not the only option. The original unit is working, but the Quantar is a current, state-of-the-art, commercial-grade (more tolerant of extremes than amateur) repeater, has the added benefit of being digital-capable, and he feels that it is a good deal, though John W9WHE has not given a deadline for the sale yet. Al believes the Club should support new digital technology/ies. After much thought, however, he has come to the conclusion that the amount required to assume the responsibility of this (or any other) digital-capable repeater is probably more than TCARC should be spending, given the current treasury and the small percentage of members who would likely take part in the benefits. He stated that he would retain the responsibility for the repeater and its operation. Ralph said he felt the Club should support Al if needed, and Milt agreed.

Al stated that Illini Radio Group has generously provided a home for both repeaters (146.760 and 444.100) for many years, but the Club needs to be prepared to locate alternative repeater sites, if the present location becomes unavailable for whatever reason. Long-range planning for future financial needs is something we should be doing now. Mike asked if the Club had a capital fund, Milt stated not at present. Al suggested the idea of estate planning. He also reiterated his offer to teach anyone to pass an amateur license exam, with the provision that the student donate \$100 to the Club on passing. Chris asked if the Club could take donations from members and put them in a separate fund specifically to support the 444.100 repeater. Milt noted that this is possible, but tax-deductibility (a benefit for some) is not available, as the Club is not a 501(c)(3) organization. Ralph asked about future maintenance costs. Al believes the Quantar is probably easily repairable, should the need arise. He doesn't necessarily want the Club to fund K9SI/R, but has no problem with a TCARC fund set aside for its support. Milt suggested that ARES be informed of any changes in the K9SI repeater, as well as given the opportunity to support it also. Wayne noted that ARES is a 501(c)(3), and perhaps donations could be solicited through them, with the incentive of tax deductions.

Further discussion on the history of the K9SI repeater ensued.

Future Club meetings:

November: Mike suggested a field trip to the radio station/repeater site. Al will check into it.

December: Milt asked about Christmas get-togethers. It was decided to have a regular meeting, possibly an FM Clinic, where HTs could be evaluated for deviation, etc.

Bylaws:

Ralph needs a current set of Club Bylaws. He wondered what the procedure was to make a person a TCARC Life Member, specifically Mark Garrett KA9SZX. Wayne found a copy of Bylaws--the Board discusses a nomination and proposes it to the membership for a decision. Milt nominated Al Wolfe K9SI also. The Board voted unanimously for KA9SZX, likewise (less Al) for K9SI. These nominations will be brought to the TCARC membership for decision.

VE session: Next to be held Sunday October 21 at FSI.