

McARCS Minutes – November 11th, 2024 @ 18:00

Present – Mike KC6MGM, Nick KI6RIT, Dan W6AAM, Michael KM6OTE, Sean K6SCM, Tim WB9NJS, Mary Jane WA3VUI, John KJ6IBP, John W6FQX, Steve KJ6EIF

Welcome and introductions – Tim WB9NJS initiated the meeting at 18:03

Minutes from previous meeting

No changes from draft minutes proposed.

Treasurer's report – Tim WB9NJS

A check was made to Nick KI6RIT in the amount of \$359.03, for website hosting reimbursement (both prior 3 years and upcoming 3 years). The current balance of the McARCS bank account is \$767.09. A check for yearly Zoom account costs in the amount of \$150 will be made out shortly to Mike KC6MGM, which will leave the bank account balance at \$617.09.

Dan W6AAM asked how the Zoom account costs are being split among the three organizations that use it (McARCS, MACS, and WARS). The response to his question was that McARCS is footing the bill for it this year as it has the highest usage of the account, and it received the full amount of the donation from the Mendocino Ultra Marathon earlier this year.

Status of McARCS website – Nick KI6RIT

The news archive function has been redesigned. All aged-out news posts are normally moved to a single news archive page, chronologically posted with the newest articles at the top and linked to from the bottom of the news page. For unknown reasons (likely PHP-related), since the web host move, attempting to edit this sizable page resulted in an error message and the edit failing to take effect. Testing revealed that removing roughly half of the contents of the page resolved the error.

The new news archive page format now consists of each year's worth of archived news having its own page, with the prior year being linked at the bottom of each page. This both keeps the page size under this new limit, and enhances usability and readability.

Countywide net logging – Dan W6AAM

Dan has been covering logging duties for the countywide net for nearly two years, taking over for John W6FQX. The logging consists of reported numbers from community and other countywide nets, as well as individual check-ins. Nick KI6RIT has been logging in parallel occasionally, for practice and to help cover in case Dan is unavailable.

Dan will be creating a new, blank net log spreadsheet for 2025, with assistance from Nick on updating and correcting content (names, callsigns, locations).

Dan will eventually be moving out of state, so Nick and others will need to take over logging duties in the future.

News & event reviews

Healthcare facility emcomm exercise, October 17th – Tim WB9NJS

One of the main goals for this exercise was to get all 16 healthcare facilities in Mendocino County to participate and pass information to the county Office of Emergency Services (OES) via radio. Net control for the exercise was operated out of the new radio room at the emergency operations center (EOC). The event was deemed a success, with all 16 facilities participating – some of them were required to participate due to grant obligations.

One of the issues encountered during the exercise were some radio issues with a facility in Point Arena. Tim is working with them to resolve those.

As an extra test, an email to the county medical health operation area coordinator (MHOAC) was sent via Winlink, using PACTOR over HF. The MHOAC received the email, but ran into technical difficulties responding, due to how Winlink handles external emails and the usage of a distribution list on the county's side. Nick KI6RIT resolved those issues by adding the County of Mendocino domain to the allow list for incoming emails to the MACS Winlink account. Requests to also add Sonoma and Humboldt counties, as well as the Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE) to the Winlink allow list were also accommodated.

Tim is working on finishing up an after-action report. In total, around 36 hams participated in the exercise, some of them for the first time and/or newly-licensed. The exercise ran for roughly an hour.

Shakeout exercise, October 17th – Mike KC6MGM

An exercise for the yearly Shakeout event was operated in parallel to the healthcare exercise. Net control for it was also operated out of the EOC. For this exercise, all messages were transmitted digitally, via [Fldigi](#) and Fldmsg using the 145.130 repeater on Laughlin Ridge. Three other stations participated in the exercise.

Mike mentioned that he wanted to add a tsunami exercise to the event but there weren't enough coastal participants available to pull it off.

Officer nominations

As it's nearing the end of the year, the time to nominate and elect officers for the next year is quickly approaching. Tim WB9NJS stated that he is okay with staying on as treasurer. Nick KI6RIT volunteered to be secretary (and is currently filling in as acting secretary).

Steve KJ6EIF will send out an email to hams across the county soliciting nominations for the president and vice president positions.

Other business

Ukiah Police Department ham radio equipment

Dan W6AAM reached out to the chief of police to re-establish contact with UPD and get the equipment repair project going again. Mike KC6MGM gave an overview on the current and past City of Ukiah EOC and radio locations as well as logistics issues with those.

Willits Police Department ham radio equipment move

Mentioned during the above discussion was news that WPD will be moving their ham radio equipment to the Little Lake Fire Protection District building, located approximately across the street. No date was given.

MACS application process

Dan W6AAM gave an update, he is working with Jeff Adair from the county Office of Emergency Services to keep this project moving forward. He received a list of current MACS members from OES. He forwarded that list to the sheriff's office to verify against their list and determine who needs to have updated background checks and fingerprinting. Mike KC6MGM mentioned that everyone on that list has been previously background checked and fingerprinted, passed ICS 100 and 700 classes, and were issued ID cards.

The Livescan background check service incurs costs. Dan is waiting for Jeff Adair and Garrett James at OES to identify ongoing funding for Livescan services, so that MACS applicants aren't charged those fees.

Dan is also working with the sheriff's office to have their portion of the MACS application steps available in Fort Bragg, rather than just Ukiah.

Emcomm training

Mike KC6MGM gave a report on his recurring series of emcomm trainings. Six trainings were conducted this year, with 16 people participating in total. A tentative date of late February or early March was given for the next training series.

WARS update

Tim WB9NJS gave a report on recent WARS events. There was a social gathering and potluck at the Whitesboro Grange in Albion on September 28th, and a seminar at the LDS church in Willits on October 12th. Both events were well-attended.

The next two on-air meetings are on November 14th and December 12th, at 19:30 on the countywide repeater system.

The regular monthly gathering for November occurs two days after Thanksgiving. There was some discussion on whether it would occur due to that.

Dan W6AAM posted a YouTube video on the WARS Facebook page about a ham that ran an impromptu emergency net during Hurricane Helene. He called out on a repeater system with a list of

supplies he had and asked if anyone needed assistance. It turned into a multi-day net with people connecting and coordinating supply transports, welfare checks, etc.

Coastal test session, October 26th

Michael KM6OTE gave a report on the recent test session. Three people registered to take tests. Of those, two upgraded from technician-class to general-class, and one upgraded from technician-class all the way to extra-class. Congratulations to the new upgrades!

Inland test session, December 14th

The next inland test session will take place at the Lake County Office of Education in Lakeport on Saturday, December 14th. Tim WB9NJS has posted the test session information on the ARRL website and Nick KI6RIT has posted it on the McARCS site.

Misc items

Mike KC6MGM talked about his recent contacts with emergency services and law enforcement groups in Lake and Humboldt counties. While Humboldt County is very active with emergency communications using ham radio (they organized the regional emcomm exercise in August!), Lake County currently has no interest in utilizing ham radio. Nick KI6RIT mentioned that this echoes reports given by the Lake County ham group recently.

Mike KC6MGM has placed a file box in the radio room at the EOC, containing many forms – ICS 213, county Health and Human Services situation report, Red Cross, and office supplies. He requested to OES staff that a bulletin board be placed on the wall.

Mike KC6MGM mentioned a recent request to scope out a location for a radio installation in Leggett. He mentioned that there is currently one licensed ham in the vicinity.

Meeting adjourned at 19:08

The next meeting will be on December 9th @ 18:00