

Loudoun Amateur Radio Group

Regular Meeting Minutes April 20, 2024

Venue: Leesburg Lutheran Church

Meeting called to order at 8:40 AM.

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Bryan K1NSA presented information about the radio communications methods used by Loudoun County Fire and Rescue (EMS). Bryan is a certified paramedic with the county. The radios used by individual members of the department are Motorola APX NEXT radios. The radios have a touch screen and an external speaker mic. The external speaker mic includes a flashlight and allows the operator to control the radio using voice commands. The radio includes an emergency button that notifies the dispatcher directly when the button is held down for a few seconds.

The radio is programmed with radio frequencies with dedicated assignments. For instance, a paramedic can communicate directly with one of the hospitals to which patients are transported. The communication allows the hospital to prepare for treatment of the patient before the rescue vehicle arrives. Interaction with neighboring jurisdictions is possible through repeaters when needed. Frequencies are grouped to allow several members of a team working a response event to directly communicate with incident commanders or other team members.

Loudoun EMS uses frequencies slightly above 850 MHz. The signals are primarily digital using P25 TDMA signaling. In general the EMS and Police is unencrypted communications. Trunking scanners can be used to monitor department communications, but they can be quite expensive. An inexpensive alternative is to use an inexpensive USB SDR receiver and a computer. The software package SDRTunk. It is available at the URL <https://github.com/DSheirer/sdrtrunk>. A Raspberry Pi is a good platform to execute the software.

- Chris W4PMP is the chairman of the Board of Directors. He introduced Jim Stowers K4FW as a new candidate for a seat on the Board. Jim's resume of qualifications was presented on the projection screen at the front of the room. Jim was unanimously confirmed by voice vote of the club members present.
- The Alzheimers bike ride will be supported by the club. Doug KM4CG is coordinating support for the event. The event will be held on May 4. Nearly all volunteer positions are filled. David WA4TXE reported that traffic on the Leesburg repeater will be available on a single dialup phone line. An attempt will be made to link the line to a virtual meeting using Zoom or a similar app. The club has permission from the owner of the Bluemont Repeater to be used as a backup. It was noted that the Bluemont repeater supports Skywarn activity during severe weather events. Send email to leadership@k4lrg.org to get details about volunteering for this or any other club activity.

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- The club will support the Gravel Grinder Nationals again this year. The event is scheduled for May 11.
- Kevin WA4KBM showed his implementation of an APRS iGATE. The device receives APRS RF signals and updates the APRS internet site that generates the APRS map. The device can be connected to a cell phone or other hot spot to provide a temporary gateway for APRS traffic.
- Henry K2BFY reported that more than 700 logs have been submitted since this year's state QSO party. This puts Virginia firmly in third place for QSO party participation.
- Steve N4RAF reported that a new inexpensive handheld radio is available. It is the Quanshen UV-K5. The price point is similar to the Baofeng UV-5R, and the UV-K5 supports monitoring of air band transmissions.
- Bruce W3OW reported that he has recently exchanged a QSO card via direct mail with an operator in Russia.
- The Treasurer Tareck K9TRE reported that the club checking account balance is \$11,186.90. Income during the past month was \$106.96 and expenses were \$584.00.
- Steve KS1G reported that Megan Tucker from the Hillsboro Charter School has received confirmation from NASA that the school will host a student event to contact the International Space Station. The club will facilitate the event using the satellite antenna trailer. The specific date has not been assigned. The elementary school has a radio club. Volunteers will be recruited to make age-appropriate presentations to the club.
- The meeting adjourned at 10:40.
- The next club meeting is scheduled for May 18.

- Attendance

W3OW	Bruce
K1NSA	Bryan
AD7FW	Roy
KS1G	Steve
W4PMP	Chris
N3YRQ	Dilip
K2BFY	Henry

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KE4S	Dave
K4FWD	Frank
KQ4MHT	Jim
K9TRE	Tarek
K4FW	Jim
WA4TXE	David
KM4GC	Doug
N2FID	Paul
K4HCO	Jeremiah
N4RAF	Steve
N4PD	Paul
WA4KBM	Kevin
N4FAF	Jim