

# McARCS Minutes – January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026 @ 18:00

**Present** – Mary Jane WA3VUI, Dan W6AAM, Jim KC6GMF, Steve KD6DQO, Mike KC6MGM, Mike K6MAH, Andrew KM6SHZ, Nick KI6RIT, Tim WB9NJS, Allen KN6QCY, Mary Ann KM6STC, Rick KK6PZA, Steve KJ6EIF, Whitey W1TEY, Carole KI6DJH

**Welcome and introductions** – Mike KC6MGM started the meeting at 18:06

**Treasurer's report** – Tim WB9NJS

There has been no activity with the bank account since November. The current balance is \$647.29.

**Secretary's report** – Nick KI6RIT

The minutes from June, July, and December have been completed and uploaded to the McARCS website. August and October are still in progress (August had a lot of detailed discussion on some topics).

**Webmaster's report** – Nick KI6RIT

General content updates – news page, minutes and agendas, net logs, etc. An updated Zoom meeting link has been posted that should remain valid through the end of the year. The Repeaters page revamp will begin soon.

**Net Logger's report** – Dan W6AAM

Dan and Nick KI6RIT worked on an updated blank log sheet for 2026 – formatting corrections, callsign updates, removing people that have not checked in for years. The finalized log sheet has been uploaded to the McARCS website.

Dan compiled an end-of-year report and sent it to Ran KK6MUX. Of note, there were a total of 79 different callsigns that were logged throughout the year.

## **News & Event Reviews**

Nothing to report.

## **McARCS Business**

No new McARCS business topics were presented or discussed.

## **Other Business**

**WARS update** – Mike KC6MGM

Mike presented an update on behalf of Len WA6KLLK, who was not present. An in-person lunch meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at Szechuan in Willits. Len is working on lining up speakers for future lunch meetings and seminars.

**MACS update** – Mike KC6MGM

Nothing to report.

**Training update** – Mike KC6MGM

Mike is hoping to do the next round of emergency documentation and emergency communications classes over Zoom sometime in March.

**Use of WARS (145.130) repeater for digital communications during exercises & events** – Dan W6AAM

Dan spoke about concerns of the WARS repeater being used for Fldigi communications during communications exercises and emergencies. The repeater is standalone (not linked to any other repeaters), is located relatively centrally in the county (Laughlin Ridge, between Redwood Valley and Willits), and has a fairly large coverage area. The concern is that the digital messages would tie up the repeater and prevent it being used for voice communications by McARCS and MACS during an emergency, or general messages by non-affiliated hams when the countywide linked repeater system may be busy with other traffic or unavailable for other reasons (earthquake damage, equipment failure, etc.).

Mike K6MAH responded that the repeater is located at the state communications facility on the ridge and that the county is paying the site rental fees for the repeater there with the understanding that it be used for emergency communications. Were that to be not the case, the county would likely stop paying the rental fees and the repeater would need to be relocated or removed entirely.

Mike K6MAH also said that while the repeater is used for digital communications during those exercises and events, the traffic volume is typically low enough that the repeater can be used for other purposes during that time. As usual, non-emergency traffic should be kept to a minimum during those times.

Mike K6MAH also said that repeater was chosen for digital communications due to operations needs at the emergency operations center (EOC). There are two VHF/UHF radios (one primarily for voice, one primarily for digital) and antennas used by hams at the EOC. For usage of the voice radio on the countywide linked repeater system, the UHF link frequency is used to avoid interference from/with the sheriff VHF radio frequencies. This prevents UHF repeater usage with the digital radio as having both radios transmitting on the same band would cause severe receiver desense issues due to the close proximity of their antennas.

There are multiple UHF repeaters located elsewhere on Laughlin Ridge and other parts of the county. Tim WB9NJS and Nick KI6RIT are working on documenting them and eventually listing them on the McARCS website. That will allow other hams to program those repeaters into their radios as an alternate option. While the Laughlin Ridge UHF repeaters will have different and likely lesser coverage areas compared to the 145.130 repeater – different band, slightly lower elevation, different antennas, etc. – it will be a viable option for many.

**Emergency Operations Center (EOC) update** – Nick KI6RIT

Nick is planning on starting up quarterly orientation sessions in the EOC radio room for MACS members, pending approval from county Office of Emergency Services staff. Nick is also planning on

writing up documentation on the equipment in the radio room and how to use it. This documentation will be placed in a binder and stored in the room.

Mike K6MAH obtained a replacement headset (one of them was taken from the room by someone and not returned), as well as another headset amplifier and a riser platform for the ruggedized box containing the radios and power supply.

#### ***Radio and antenna installation at the Round Valley School District office*** – Mary Jane WA3VUI

Mary Jane asked if anyone had an update on the antenna and radio installation project at the school district office in Covelo. Tim WB9NJS said that school district staff need to determine where they want the antenna and radio installed so that the appropriate mounting hardware and length of coaxial cable can be provided. He has worked with staff on preliminary steps in the past but the process stopped before they made a decision. Mary Jane asked for that information to be forwarded to her so she could follow up with the school district staff.

Steve KJ6EIF said that he spoke with the maintenance director somewhat recently but that all of the staff that Steve used to work with have left so he doesn't have the connections to the school district that he used to have when he was the maintenance director at MCOE. He had concerns regarding their proposed radio equipment location (the school gymnasium equipment/utility room), both as an area with potentially significant audio and radio noise and located far away from the local disaster operations center (DOC) which would probably be in the administration office.

#### ***Future activities***

##### ***Upcoming test sessions*** – Tim WB9NJS

As of this meeting, no future test sessions have been scheduled. Tim would like to get in at least two more test sessions before the technician-class test question pool is updated in July.

There was discussion at the previous WARS on-air meeting about engaging the local Scouting groups to see if any of their members are interested in obtaining a license. Leif KO6EKU is heavily involved in the local Boy Scouts troops and would likely be a great resource.

##### ***Supported event dates*** – Mike KC6MGM

Mike updated the dates on the agenda event list for all known events this year.

##### ***Healthcare communications exercise*** – Tim WB9NJS

The next healthcare communications exercise will likely be in conjunction with the BEACON exercise this spring. This will be the last healthcare communications exercise that Tim will be coordinating for the county Public Health department. There will likely be another exercise during the Shakeout event in the fall but someone else will be coordinating that.

##### ***BEACON exercise*** – Mike K6MAH

This year's BEACON exercise is scheduled for April 30<sup>th</sup>. The exercise is still in the planning stages but it is expected to be largely the same as previous exercises. The exercise will run from 09:00 to 13:00 or so, with a pre-exercise briefing before then. Contact Mike if you are interested in participating or if

you have any questions. It is highly encouraged to become a MACS member before the exercise if you aren't one already. It is also encouraged to become proficient in using Fldigi, Flmsg, and Winlink.

Meeting adjourned at 18:46

The next meeting will be on April 13<sup>th</sup> @ 18:00