

SARA Board Meeting Tax Year 2026

10 October 2026

SARA Board Meeting.
Sunday 11/10/2026 @ 18:00 UTC (Midday Mountain Time,
2pm Eastern Time).

Status: Approved. V191026@1400.

Attendees & Apologies:

position	term	name	ham call	Attended (Y) Apologies (X)	email
SARA Board of Board Directors & Officers:					
President	2026- 2028	Jason Burnfield	n/a	Y	jasonburnfield@gmail.com
Vice-President	2026- 2028	Ken Redcap	n/a	Y	pacder@hotmail.com
Treasurer	2026- 2028	Brian O'Rourke	K4UL	Y	brian.chad@gmail.com
Secretary	2026- 2028	Andrew Thornett	M6THO	Y	andrew@thornett.net andrew.thornett@googlemail.com
Board Director	2025- 2027	Ted Cline	N0RQV	Y	TedClineGit@gmail.com
Board Director	2025- 2027	Ed Harfmann	N/A	Y	edharfmann@comcast.net
Board Director	2025- 2027	Wolfgang Herrmann	N/A	Y	messbetrieb@astropeiler.de
Board Director	2025- 2027	Bruce Randall	NT4RT	Y	brandall@comporium.net
Board Director	2026- 2028	John Colt, Jr.	NV1Y	Y	jzcolt@gmail.com johnzcolt@gmail.com
Board Director	2026- 2028	Dimitry Fedorov	UA3AVR	Y	ua3avr@yandex.com ua3avr.feddk@gmail.com
Board Director	2026- 2028	Martin Knoblauch	N3BEV	Y	mtkn3bev@aol.com
Board Director	2026- 2028	Stephen Tzikas	N/A	X	tzikas@alum.rpi.edu
Founder/Board Director Emeritus	life	Jeff Lichtman	KI4GIY	X	jeff@radioastronomysupplies.com
Invitees to the board meeting in addition to the board:					

invited to lead discussion on meteor activity.		Jay Wilson		Y	jay.wilson@vodec.net
Outreach		Robert Hipple		Y	hipple@msu.edu
New Super SID Constructor		Robert Canillas			91710robert@gmail.com

Details of proposals and voting is in first appendix.

President opened meeting & gave his report (Jason Burnfield).

- Welcome to new and old members & invitees.
- Actions arising: Jason plans to contact Sophie St. George at Green Bank re Jansky Telescope refurbishment.

Officers & Board Composition

- **President:** Jason Burnfield; **Vice President:** Ken Redcap; **Treasurer:** Brian O'Rourke; **Secretary:** Andrew Thornett
- **Newly elected board members:** John Colt, Dmitry Fedorov, Martin Knoblauch, Steve Tzikas
- **Returning board members (second year):** Ted Cline, Ed Harfmann, Wolfgang Herrmann, Bruce Randall
- **Special invitees** (non-board, attending to speak to specific topics): Jay Wilson and Robert Hipple

Summary of the results of the election at SARA Eastern Conference August 2026:

1. Jason Burnfield – President, with 45 votes;
2. Ken Redcap – Vice President, with 46 votes;
3. Andrew Thornett – Secretary, with 46 votes;
4. Brian O'Rourke – Treasurer, with 45 votes;
5. John Colt – Board Director, with 45 votes;
6. Dmitry Fedorov – Board Director, with 47 votes;
7. Martin Knoblauch – Board Director, with 46 votes;
8. Steve Tzikas – Board Director, with 46 votes.

Financial Report (Brian O'Rourke/Treasurer).

- See attached annual financial report July 2025-June 2026 & copy of Brian's presentation attached to minutes.
- Current balances: **PayPal \$5,994.37, Checking >\$14,000, Savings >\$77,000, Total ~\$97,947.76.**
- Primary income sources: **dues (~\$10,000/year)**, Eastern Conference surplus (**\$2,246**), and gift shop (**\$1,466.59**).
- Key expenses include Dropbox, web hosting, domain registration, MailChimp, QuickBooks, Zoom, Shopify, 20-meter telescope access, and SARA grants.
- **SARA grants:** \$5,000 already allocated; a motion by **Tom Crowley** to allocate an additional **\$5,000** was seconded by Jason and approved unanimously.
- **Tax status clarification:** SARA files the IRS "postcard" (short form for nonprofits) because annual revenue stays under the **\$50,000 threshold**; total assets on hand do not count toward this limit.

- **Wolfgang** raised the question of whether donations could be revitalized; Brian confirmed donations are always accepted but SARA is not in danger of exceeding the non-profit threshold for annual revenue.
- Brian acknowledged recent issues consistently covering treasurer duties (due to prior treasurer dealing with significant health challenges), noting the annual financial report figures were imperfect as a result.

Committee Structure & Membership

- Committees identified: **Membership** (chair position open for some time), **Grant** (Tom Crowley, not present), **Education/Outreach** (Ken Redcap listed as co-chair), **Journal Editor** (Brian O'Rourke as temporary editor), **Eastern Conference Coordinator** (Ken Redcap), **Western Conference Coordinator** (Jason Burnfield)
- **Robert Hipple** (Michigan State University, active in MSU amateur radio club) expressed interest in volunteering; education and outreach identified as the best fit.
- Ken Redcap and Robert Hipple are both in Michigan (Ken in Clarkston); agreed to connect offline about local outreach, including a school in Morganton, North Carolina that recently reached out to SARA.
- **Minutes note:** Robert Hipple will talk to Ken Redcap about education/outreach participation and report back to the leadership committee.

Planning for Eastern and Western Conference:

Discussion led by organisers of conferences.

- **Western Conference** (coordinated by Jason Burnfield):
 - Targeting spring (April) at the VLA (Very Large Array); working to align timing with the **NRAO Spring Open House** the same weekend to amplify outreach.
 - Also pursuing a screening of the documentary "**Small Town Universe**" (about Green Bank) at the VLA visitor centre the same weekend, to stack outreach opportunities.
- **Eastern Conference** (coordinated by Ken Redcap):
 - Ken has attempted to contact **Sophie St. George at Green Bank** about keynote speakers without response; Jason committed to reaching out to Sophie in a professional capacity this coming week and including Ken in the email.
 - Both conferences need keynote speakers and calls for papers lined up well in advance.
 - Jason also noted that contacting Sophie dovetails with a separate outstanding action to discuss the **Jansky antenna refurbishment project** at Green Bank, which he had not yet completed.

Setting up organised meteor observation activities through SARA, including developing a meteor beacon.

- Discussion will be facilitated by Jay Wilson (Bascombe J. Wilson jay.wilson@vodec.net).
- See briefing paper attached to the minutes.
- **Jay Wilson** (from Little Thompson Observatory, Colorado) proposed formally establishing a **Meteor Science Committee** within SARA.
- Background: over a dozen SARA members have worked informally on meteor science for 10+ years, reporting at conferences but never as an official SARA activity.
- **Proposed collaborations:** HAMSCI (active meteor studies group) and Little Thompson Observatory, which has already invested in **five 1,000-watt beacon systems** based on SARA presentations from 2016.
- One test beacon is currently on air from Colorado; the plan is to eventually deploy non-directional horizontal dipole antennas for uniform coverage from horizon to ~80° elevation.

- **Licensing pathway:** Initial tests on ham frequencies at 100W; Little Thompson is pursuing an **FCC experimental license** for ~49 MHz at full 1,000W; long-term goal is an **ISM-class license** with no power limit, potentially scaling to 5–10 kW with university/grant partnerships.
- **Educational vision:** Receiver systems deployable in middle/high schools (grades 5–9) as a STEM enrichment tool, linking meteor science to earth science, atmospheric science, ionosphere, and deep space origins.
- Robert Canillas's wife (a professor at a School of Education) suggested contacting **Steve Goodgame at ARRL**, who runs the Teachers Institute, as a potential resource.
- **Motion passed unanimously:** Meteor Science Committee officially created; **Jay Wilson and Chip Sufitchi** designated as co-chairs.
- John Colt asked about board member participation on committees; Jay noted that in some organizations a board member is required on each committee to ensure alignment — no conflict of interest identified.

Review of SuperSID project:

- **Robert Canillas (AD6XJ)**, based in La Mirada, California, 91710robert@gmail.com, is the new SuperSID constructor, taking over from the previous builder 9
- The project is more involved than initially expected: 400 feet of antenna wire per unit, 50 feet of coax, heat shrink at 8 points, chocolate block connectors, drilling enclosure holes, flashing SD cards 10
- Robert purchased antenna wire on a **10,000-foot spool (~\$650)** and coax on a spool to reduce per-unit costs; bulk component savings between 10x and 100x quantities were not significantly different, so he ordered parts for 10 units 910
- First two boards assembled; not yet tested; a function generator will be used for testing; USB and audio cables still to be made 9
- **Reimbursement process:** Robert submits receipts to Brian, who reimburses via PayPal; same process applies to the Scope in the Box coordinator 11
- **Customer relations issue:** Two chargebacks in recent months from impatient customers, each costing SARA \$20; one customer was described as rude 11
- **Action agreed:** Brian will add a disclaimer to the website stating SuperSIDs are **custom-made and may take up to 6 weeks** to ship, to set expectations and reduce chargebacks 12
- Robert noted alternative VLF receivers exist (e.g., QRP Builders' VLF receiver, Inspire Project) if customers cannot wait 1213
- Board accepted that price of SuperSID likely to need to be increased due to price increases for components and postage and gave permission for this to occur.

Review of Scope in a Box project:

- Discussion led by Brian.
- **Lester Veenstra** manages Scope in the Box orders: when an order comes in, Lester purchases components from Amazon and ships directly to the customer — no in-house assembly required
- Kit contents: **SDR, low-noise amplifier (LNA), parabolic antenna, and connecting cables**; instructions hosted on Dropbox.
- Priced at **\$350**; costs are close to but under \$350, so the program does not lose money.
- **Identified weakness:** SDR driver compatibility is the most common technical hurdle for beginners, sometimes even for technically experienced users, due to the RTL-SDR's European TV receiver origin and its quirky driver behaviour.

- **AirSpy Mini** (~\$100 vs. ~\$45 for RTL-SDR) proposed as a more beginner-friendly alternative — plug-and-play, single driver, not affected by Windows update issues; Brian noted SARA already occasionally substitutes it when RTL-SDRs are out of stock.
- **SARA mentor program** already in place for grant recipients (e.g., a young woman in Colorado receiving a Scope in the Box is being mentored and may write a journal article).
- Suggestion raised to publish a short list of technical volunteer contacts for ad hoc SDR setup support beyond the listserv.

Small Town Universe film:

- Discussion led by Jason Burnfield on SARA being involved in helping to get screening of the film at VLA outreach centre.
- Jason has been in touch with team marketing the film.
- He would like organise screening of movie at VLA open-house weekend.

Ensuring organisation is not at risk:

- Is it worth obtaining insurance? SARA does not currently have insurance.
 1. Third party liability. Wolfgang – SARA has discussed this previously = SARA has no premises and liability is minimal and liability limited by amount of assets SARA has.
 2. Copyright infringement protection in journal, on website and on videos on YouTube channel. Wolfgang – liability due to copyright infringement – not previously discussed.
 3. Liability of Board members to individual decisions. Wolfgang – liability of officers of SARA = if officers do something that damages organisation e.g. violates tax status of SARA – previously Board has considered taking out insurance to protect individual officers against claims that SARA might make against them.
- Brian – SARA incorporated in Alabama, it is multi-state organisation, he recommends get lawyer to give advice if we are concerned about it.
- Wolfgang – recommends going back to previous email exchange where liabilities of non-profit organisation were discussed. Board agreed to this.
- Martin Knoblauch (who is a lawyer) gave an opinion: Liability limit of SARA corporation is \$100k as what has in bank. Individual members of Board are highly protected when happens corporately such as today's board meeting (need to show at least one board meeting per year – more is better – and also show elected officers, which we have). Big problem is personal injury activity in the two main conferences each year. Often non-profit organisation utilising other facilities are asked for proof of insurance from the non-profit organisation covering that event – usually insurance that just covers that event. If someone gets hurt the lawyer would claim against event location and against SARA – normal practice to claim against both organisations – so insurance cover for these events is a good idea. Copyright – two kinds of copyright in USA – common law copyright but need to claim that copyright. SARA Journal should say inside Copyright SARA and a date and email address. Also, Creative Commons copyright & fair use rules. Taking photo of someone including attendees at conferences and of board members – it is not automatic that these can be used in the journal – so we need to get signed release from everyone in the photos – as in USA people have rights over their photograph etc. Martin does not know of anyone who gives copyright insurance. Martin does not know whether the use of "Stanford University" on the SuperSID is acceptable.
- Actions agreed by board:
 - Coordinators of the two SARA Eastern and Western Conferences to contact venues and find out to what extent SARA is covered at the events and what extra insurance is required. Then to investigate insurance options & discuss with leadership team. Completion deadline 31 December 2026.

- Brian will investigate insurance like that mentioned by Jay Wilson, who is on board of nonprofit organisation that has "Officer and Directors insurance", \$1 million per director, per occurrence. That organization's policy is from The Hanover, and agent is RISK STRATEGIES COMPANY 333 W. WACKER DRIVE, SUITE 1200, CHICAGO, IL 60606.

Hydrogen Survey Database Access:

- Public access to the **hydrogen survey hosted at Bonn University** (<https://www.astro.uni-bonn.de/hisurvey/>) had been interrupted due to an AI-related security breach.
- Jason proposed a stopgap: having someone with access pull a small set of **spectral profiles at strategic galactic plane coordinates** for two aperture sizes ($\sim 15^\circ$ and $\sim 5^\circ$) to post on the SARA site for beginner comparison.
- **Wolfgang reported** that just hours before the meeting that public access has been **restored**, though it is unclear if this is permanent; he has a meeting with university representatives that Wednesday to find out.
- Underlying concern: the database represents years of observations and multiple academic theses; the university may be worried about **intellectual property being scraped without attribution**.
- Jason noted SARA has consistently credited the survey in publications; Wolfgang offered that SARA's servers could potentially host an excerpt if access is interrupted again.

Any other business:

- SARA Journal (Brian). Intends to run submitted articles through AI filter to check whether copyright concerns or any evidence of plagiarism.
- Robert Hipple (hipple@msu.edu) offered to volunteer where he could most help. He is interested in education and outreach. He will talk to Ken Redcap (kr5ara@comcast.net, Clarkston, MI) about how he can take part in that area and report back to leadership committee.

End of Meeting.

Society of Amateur Radio Astronomers (SARA) Annual General Board Meeting – 11 October 2026 Record of Motions, Seconders and Voting Results

Meeting Chair: Jason Burnfield, President

Minutes Secretary: Andrew Thornett

Meeting format: Zoom videoconference

Meeting times: 19:01–21:29 British Summer Time (BST)

1. Opening of the Meeting

The President, Jason Burnfield, formally called the Annual General Board Meeting to order at approximately 19:01 BST.

Proposed by: Jason Burnfield

Seconded by: Ken Redcap

The meeting proceeded to the published agenda.

2. Additional Allocation to the SARA Grants Programme

Time: Approximately 19:17 BST

A motion was presented to allocate an additional \$5,000 to the SARA grants programme for the current year.

Proposed by: Tom Murphy

Seconded by: Jason Burnfield

Voting result: Carried unanimously.

Resolution: The Board approved an additional allocation of \$5,000 to the SARA grants programme.

3. Establishment of a Meteor-Scatter Beacon Project Committee

Time: Approximately 20:09 BST

A motion was presented to establish a committee to oversee the development and coordination of the meteor-scatter beacon project.

It was proposed that Jay Wilson and Chip serve as the initial co-chairs of the committee.

Proposed by: Jason Burnfield

Seconded by: Martin Knoblauch

Voting result: Carried unanimously.

Resolution: The Board approved the establishment of the meteor-scatter beacon project committee, with Jay Wilson and Chip as its initial co-chairs.

4. Investigation of Insurance Options for SARA

Time: Approximately 21:17 BST

A motion was presented to authorise an investigation into insurance options available to SARA, particularly group insurance arrangements.

Proposed by: Brian O'Rourke

Seconded by: Jason Burnfield

Ken Redcap also expressed his support for the motion.

Voting result: Carried unanimously.

Resolution: The Board authorised Brian O'Rourke to investigate potential insurance arrangements for SARA and report his findings.

5. Conference Planning – Agreed Action

Time: Approximately 21:12 BST

Jason Burnfield proposed that the Eastern and Western Conference coordinators complete their investigations and report back before the end of the calendar year.

A formal seconder and vote were not clearly recorded in the transcript.

Outcome: Recorded as an action item rather than a formally adopted resolution.

6. Adjournment of the Meeting

Time: Approximately 21:29 BST

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made.

Proposed by: Jason Burnfield

Seconded by: Ken Redcap

Voting result: Carried unanimously.

The President declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 21:29 BST.

An earlier proposal to adjourn had been made at approximately 21:24, but additional business was subsequently considered before the meeting formally concluded.

Summary of Voting

Motion	For	Against	Abstentions	Outcome
Additional \$5,000 for grants	Unanimous	0	Not separately recorded	Carried
Meteor-scatter committee	Unanimous	0	Not separately recorded	Carried
Investigation of insurance	Unanimous	0	Not separately recorded	Carried
Adjournment	Unanimous	0	Not separately recorded	Carried

Note: All motions were confirmed as unanimously approved. The Zoom transcript does not establish exact numerical vote counts or independently verify the absence of abstentions. Accordingly, no numerical totals of affirmative votes have been entered.

Prepared by: Andrew Thornett
Secretary, Society of Amateur Radio Astronomers