

Updated 6/10/2024 8:45 AM

2024 Mid-States Region of the Astronomical League Business Meeting Minutes

The 2024 MSRAL convention was planned, organized and hosted by the Omaha Astronomical Society, June 7 – 9, at Eugene T Mahoney State Park, Ashland, NE

Regional Representative Peg Walker called the business meeting to order at 8:03 AM. Regional Chair Val Germann was unable to attend due to a health problem. Vice-chair Fred Gassert resigned his position about a month ago because of his health problems.

Peg welcomed all MSRAL members in attendance, AL Chair Carroll Iorg, and the North Central Region Chair Alan Sheidler. Peg talked about the excellent group of convention speakers including a representative from Sky and Telescope magazine, and noted that AL and Sky & Tel were both founded in 1939.

Peg talked about a list included in participant envelopes of past MSRAL conventions showing names of officers, award winners and other details. Much of this information has been found during the past 12 months, and collated as an excellent document about the history of MSRAL, now celebrating its 75th anniversary.

Regional Secretary/Treasurer Mike Gallagher conducted a roll call of MSRAL member societies present in the business meeting. A quorum of 8 of 21 were presents.

Representatives of the following societies were present:

Springfield Astronomical Society
Astronomical Society of Kansas City
Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri
St. Louis Astronomical Society
Omaha Astronomical Society
Platte Valley Astronomical Observers
Prairie Astronomical Club of Lincoln
Broken Arrow Sidewalk Astronomers

Member societies not present in the business meeting:

Arkansas Oklahoma Astronomical Society
Astronomical Society of NW Arkansas
Astronomy Associates of Lawrence
Astronomical Society of Tulsa
Bartlesville Astronomical Society
***Boeing Employees Amateur Astronomy Club – St. Louis (Jim Twellman says this club might not be actually a member society of MSRAL)**
Central Arkansas Astronomical Society
Central Missouri Amateur Astronomy Club
Eastern Missouri Dark Sky Observers
Eastern Ozarks Astronomical Society

Kansas Astronomical Observers
North Central Arkansas Astronomical Society
Northeast Kansas Amateur Astronomers League
****Panhandle Astronomy Club**
Northeast Nebraska Astronomy Club
****Riverbend Astronomy Club (Jim Twellman says RAC is not part of MSRAL since it's not located in Missouri)**
****Southeast Missouri Astronomy Club should be Astronomical Society of Southeast Missouri ASSEMO NOTE: by Peggy Walker 8/6/2025**
****Star Garden Foundation**
Sugar Creek Astronomical Society

NOTE; THESE CLUBS HAVE NOT BEEN MEMBERS FOR MANY YEARS – FOR SOME REASON OLD LIST WAS USED FOR ROLE CALL. Peggy Walker 8/6/2025

Mike Gallagher read the minutes of the 2023 business meeting. There were no corrections or additions. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Cook Feldman and seconded by Bill Bond. The motion was approved unanimously by vote of the members.

Mike Gallagher gave a treasurers report. In summary, the opening balance in July 2023 was \$7236.60. Income from the 2022 MSRAL convention was \$318.78, and the 2023 convention seed money of \$750 was returned by the Astronomy Club of Tulsa. Expenses were a \$400 stipend to the Regional Rep to attend the AL convention, and \$167.88 for GoDaddy Webhosting. The balance on June 8, 2023 was \$7,737.50. A motion was made by Bill Bond and seconded by Jim Small to accept the budget as read was voted on and approved unanimously by the members.

The list of deceased MSRAL members provided to each participant was reviewed, and Peg asked if anyone knows of additions or corrections. The following names were given: John Hanis, ASKC; Gerry Pittman, ACT; Kendahl Shane in December 2023, OAS; Bob Kirschenmann, ACT(**Jim Twellman thinks he was active with EMDSO and will let me know after he checks**); and Joseph Abs in 2023, SLAS.

Peg asked about making a donation to International Dark Sky Association (IDA) since no donation was made last year. There was some discussion from several members about not making a donation at this time because of reported financial insolvency and organization instability of IDA. Jon Larsen added that the IDA organization's name recently changed to DarkSky International. A motion was made to NOT send a donation to the IDA organization at this time by Cook Feldman and seconded by Bill Bond. The motion was voted on and approved unanimously by the members.

Elections of MSRAL officers: Peg asked for nominations for Vice-Chair and there were none. Secretary/Treasurer Mike Gallagher said he wishes to be replaced and Peg asked for nominations and there were none. Later in the day Jim Twellman from the Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri said he would like to be the secretary/treasurer.

Just before the banquet started a motion was made and seconded and unanimously approved by vote of everyone to elect Jim Twellman as Secretary/Treasurer. Peg Walker continues as Regional Representative because her current 3-yr term ends in June, 2025. Regional Chair Val Germann also continues in his 2-year term for another year.

MSRAL 75th Anniversary pins were given to each person who registered this year for the convention and additional pins may be purchased from Mike Gallagher for \$5.00 each. The pins were paid by private donation and not purchased by the convention planners or by the MSRAL executive board.

Peg said the Southwest Region of the Astronomical League used MSRAL bylaws as a model to update their regional bylaws.

A convention training guide used by the North Central Region of the Astronomical League was used by Peg to make a guide for MSRAL in fall of 2023 and was used by the 2024 convention planners. It will be very helpful for the planners of future MSRAL conventions.

Peg gave a talk at the winter star party about amateur radio astronomy, spectrography, and the April 8, 2024 solar eclipse.

Central Arkansas Astronomical Society has volunteered to host the 2025 MSRAL convention.

Central Missouri will hold the 2026 MSRAL convention at Columbia, MO. There will be a tour of their observatory, museum, and national park. Fred Gassert previously indicated the convention in 2027 may be sponsored by the Kansas Astronomical Observers.

Peg said a convention in North Carolina enlarged the attendance of their convention by adding programs for family and students.

New Business:

It was announced that a Dob fest will be held in September for amateur telescope makers.

Jon Larsen made a motion for the word change of "Omaha" to "2007" be made in the bylaws in Standing Resolution #3 Yearly International Dark Sky Association. It was seconded by Mike Modrcin. It was unanimously approved by vote of the members present.

Carroll Org spoke about the 2024 AL convention in Kansas City, July 17-20. Jim Small suggested more amateur astronomers would attend if the convention was less expensive. Jim said the charges, such as, \$40 for the continental breakfast, and high prices of the hotel where the convention will be held is too expensive for many amateur astronomers.. Jim also asked why the price for virtually attending the convention is as expensive as attending the convention in person. Carroll said, overall the value received is well worth

the cost. Someone added that the higher prices in a large part result the effects that the Covid virus had on the hotel industry.

Cook asked Carroll Iorg why the minutes of previous AL business meeting minutes were not published or made available to anyone interested. Cook said the 2023 AL conventions business meeting minutes were not published. Carroll said he would look into it and agreed the minutes should have been published. Cook also asked why the AL does not publish a financial report that members can reviews. In addition, Cook added that the AL is not producing the documents that are required for non-profit organizations. Carroll said the AL is doing what is required by the IRS.

Peg asked if anyone had further items to introduce and, hearing none, a motion was made by Bill Bond and secnded by Cook Feldman to adjourn the meeting, The unanimous vote ended the meeting at 9:00 AM, a half-hour sooner than the time allotted for the business meeting.