

CRRRA Members Meeting December 6, 2023 Minutes

Champlain Regional Repeater Association
Members Meeting 2023

December 6, 2023

7 p.m. via Zoom (an approach adopted during COVID-19 but continued because more members seem to be able to attend the meetings in this format)

Present: Greg VE3ECI (Chair), Ed VA3EJT (1st Vice President), Alan VA3IAH (2nd Vice President), Phil VE3HOA (Technical Director), Robert VA3AGN (Net Manager), Tim VA3PYC (Secretary & Zoom host), Graham VE3AMN, Bill VE3TUC, Ron VE3RKB, Rob VE3JA, Greg VA3GMA, Tyler VA3DGN, Steve VE3KEG, Dave VE3LBO, Cristian VA3CTQ, Alan VE3VTT, Bob VE3YX

The agenda for the meeting was circulated via email in advance of the meeting.

Agenda

Call Meeting to Order

1. Club state of affairs: VE3ECI Greg
2. STP Site 2 power rework: VE3AMN Graham & VA3EJT Ed
3. VE3STP FM repeater evolution: VE3HOA Phil & VA3EJT Ed
4. STP Site 1 accessibility and packet operation: VA3PYC Tim & VE3AMN Graham
5. Ontario Not-for-profit Corporation Act (ONCA) way forward: VA3IAH Alan
6. Members round table discussion

Greg VE3ECI called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

1. CRRRA State of Affairs

Greg VE3ECI reminded members that membership dues can be submitted to - Interac VE3ECI@icloud.com

Alan VA3IAH suggested that we modify the Net Controller script to add how the CRRRA is supported by membership dues and (gracious) donations, something that Greg VE3ECI does now. Robert VA3AGN, the net manager, was in support of this revision.

Greg VE3ECI then provided a summary of the finances for the club beginning with the major expenses for 2023 (see table).

CRRRA Key Expenses (May-YTD)

Item	Amount	Date
RAC DARF Donation	\$100.00	2023-07-18
High Current Relays	\$74.87	2023-08-26
Distribution Panels & Connectors	\$236.27	2023-09-18
Battery & Fuses	\$425.26	2023-11-14
RAC Insurance	\$469.52	2023-11-24
Total	\$1305.92	

Financial Status: YTD Account Balance \$1910.69

Greg VE3ECI noted that in addition to financial donations, Graham VE3AMN, Phil VE3HOA and Ed VA3EJT have donated equipment and components, and a lot of time!

Greg noted a number of developments this year including:

- New Web Master(s) Cristian VA3CTQ & Stefan VA3STQ
- 2024 May AGM Elections – at which point we will seek a new Treasurer to replace Jim VE3KAW who had to step down, but he also noted that all positions are up for re-election.
- We will be working on the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporation Act (ONCA) Bylaw Builder Committee beginning in January, 2024.
- We need to consider Allstar opportunities and operation at Site 2 to provide digital access.

2. **STP Site 2 power rework: VE3AMN Graham & VA3EJT Ed**

Graham VE3AMN summarized the work done to upgrade the power system at Site 2. This was needed to eliminate ground loops and power fluctuations. With a gift from Dave VE3LBO, he and Ed VA3EJT were able to install a new battery and new Astron power supply along with heavy gauge conductors connecting everything to minimize voltage drop.

Ed VA3EJT continued the presentation by showing images of the equipment at Site 2 highlighting the new power configuration. Ed is planning on upgrading the

board for additional features over the winter (e.g., remote notifications).

Rob VA3AGN asked about the load or power draw for each radio. Ed VA3EJT explained that only the overall system output is available, not each radio. Rob VA3AGN also asked if there has been a power failure when the generator did not come on. Graham VE3AMN noted that he was not aware of any.

Cristian VA3CTQ asked if there was a surge protector on the power supply. Graham explained that there was surge protection on the input and output of the rectifiers. The building itself has a built-in surge protector as well.

3. **VE3STP FM repeater evolution: VE3HOA Phil & VA3EJT Ed**

Phil VE3HOA began by noting that over the course of the year the “gremlins” that we’ve been experiencing became more problematic. Phil first addressed this by working on the filters and feedlines, but he finally reached the point, particularly with the winter weather coming, where he decided to take a different approach. Phil explained that after Graham VE3AMN and Tim VA3PYC tested the feedline and antenna, Phil explored if RF was getting into the system some other way. Along with Ed VA3EJT, Phil looked at “cleaning up” the wiring. This resulted in taking out just about all of the existing coax. Phil pulled out the existing radio and put the MotoTurbo repeater into service. The MotorTurbo is being powered by Ed’s new panel and is the repeater for 147.06. Phil also put in a new set of filter cans with Graham’s harness. The APRS and D-Star machines are still in the Site 2 shack and operational. Finally, Phil set up his AllStar node to serve as our Echolink system in place of Ed’s Raspberry Pi system because it was not feasible to hook up the Raspberry Pi system to the MotoTurbo repeater on such a short time frame.

Phil summarized the PBX system that Andrew VE6EN has set up and how using IP phone sets can operate on this system. This can get users on the digital system using this bridge. It opens up opportunities that we were going to use on 145.39. Phil suggested that one opportunity for linking might be to connect to the AARC D-Star net on Tuesday evenings. Prior to this, we may simply test the system on another day just to do some ad hoc testing before connecting to a net.

Going forward, Phil suggested that we might shift the MotoTurbo back to 145.39, but that we acquire another commercial repeater for 147.06. Unfortunately, the Kenwood TKR-750 repeater that Graham gave to Phil has a problem with the receiver. This repeater only has a 50% duty cycle when running 100% power, so should not be run barefoot. All of this work is planned for the spring. Hopefully what has been done this fall will hold for the winter.

Ed VA3EJT added that the MotoTurbo is basically two radios inside a box. This

enclosure is important in terms of RF, and we should keep this in mind for future installation. Ed showed images of the SDR on site that he is using to monitor the activity on the MotoTurbo repeater.

4. STP Site 1 accessibility and packet operation: VA3PYC Tim & VE3AMN Graham

Graham VE3AMN summarized the work that he and Tim VA3PYC did on Site 1 beginning with cleaning up the road to the shack. This required cutting down a tree and trimming juniper bushes along the sides of the road. He then explained how testing of the cabling in the shack revealed a faulty N-type connector and they replaced it. The packet station is diplexed to the same antenna as the UHF meshtastic radio, and it was operational when they left the site in mid-October.

The packet station was operational in October, but recent testing revealed a problem with the packet station; Greg VE3ECI managed to leave a message but with many retries, and Tim VA3PYC was unable to connect. (NOTE: Although intermittent, the packet station does seem to be working, as Bob VE3YX was able to connect after the meeting.)

Not many operators are using packet, but Bob VE3YX uses it to digipeat to Ottawa, and Tim VA3PYC uses it intermittently for Winlink packet to Ottawa.

5. Ontario Not-for-profit Corporation Act (ONCA) way forward: VA3IAH Alan

Greg VE3ECI noted that Alan VA3IAH has experience with this process with the OVMRC (Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club). The OVMRC has established a committee, but not much has been done as yet. Alan noted that Greg has done very good background work to date. Alan explained that by October 2024 all Not-for-profit groups must have updated bylaws and letters of patent. Alan is planning to use the workbook that has been provided by the Non-Profit Law Ontario to write up a draft of new bylaws and letters of patent for discussion at the May AGM.

Greg VE3ECI asked Al VE3VTT about what was happening with the Lanark Club. Al wasn't sure, but will ask and get back to Greg. Greg noted that he expects that most clubs have similar bylaws, and we may well be able to model ourselves off of other clubs. Tyler VA3DGN also volunteered to report back on what was happening in Lanark. Robert VA3AGN noted that he spoke with one of the RAC Vice Presidents, Al Boyd, who has also offered assistance.

Greg noted that in January we will set up a Zoom session with representatives with local clubs. Al suggested that a workshop with CLEO may be helpful as well. Greg and Al will discuss this and bring it back to the Executive for execution in January, 2024. Bob VE3YX also noted that the Renfrew club would like to be

involved with the January meeting.

6. Members round table discussion

The rest of the evening was spent in open discussion about the CRRA, project proposals and ideas for the future. Each member had an opportunity to address any issue of interest. There was interest expressed in getting AllStar running sooner than later, running 2-meter exercises between local clubs as was done last year with VE3VTT, continued development of the facilities at Site 2 in the spring, as well as many notes of thanks to Phil VE3HOA, Ed VA3EJT, Graham VE3AMN and Greg VE3ECI. Finally, Dave VE3LBO made a comment about nightly net check ins where stations use the phrase "no traffic" but then each station makes many comments afterwards. This is inconsistent with the use of "no traffic" on amateur radio nets more generally, so it was suggested that we model not using "no traffic" but simply check in with call sign and name. Cristian VA3CTQ provided a web site status update and will investigate a method of presenting the chapters of Jean VE2OCQ's novel 'The Notice' in a consistent way,

7. The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 p.m.