

Champlain Regional Repeater Association  
Meeting of the Executive

January 19, 2021

7 p.m. via Zoom (to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic)

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Present: Greg VE3ECI (Chair), Tim VA3PYC (Zoom host & note taker), James VE3KAW, Robert VA3AGN, Graham VE3AMN, Allen VE3JGU, Randy VA3RKS, Phil VE3HOA

Guest: Ed VA3EJT

Absent: Jim VA3GMZ

The agenda for the meeting was circulated via email.

Agenda:

- Review previous executive meeting minutes - Tim
- Project updates:
  - STP VHF FM repeater plan & status - Phil/Graham
  - STP VHF DMR repeater plan & status - Phil/Graham
  - STP Site 1 Packet Digi - Graham
  - STP Site 2 Router Issue - Greg
  - STP VHF FM RPI based EchoLink plan - Greg
  - Site 2 additional antenna options for discussion - Greg
  - YYX?
- Special initiatives update:
  - Financials & Membership - James
  - ARES update - Greg and Ed Tink VA3EJT
  - DMR radio(s) club purchase potential - Greg
  - CRRR/STP history curation - Group discussion
  - STP site 1 lease situation and future plan - Group discussion
  - Social events - Place holder
  - AGM planning - Place holder
- New business:

The meeting began at 7:10 p.m.

**Review of the minutes – outstanding business from previous meetings**

Tim (PYC) reviewed outstanding action items from the previous two meetings.

1. Tim VA3PYC suggested that we host a Zoom DMR session.

**PREVIOUS ACTION ITEM:** James will ask Phil VE3HOA if he would be willing to lead this.

**OUTSTANDING – need to speak with James about this who was absent due to a lack of an Internet connection.**

**This is still outstanding.**

**ACTION:** Phil will consider this.

**2. PREVIOUS ACTION ITEM:** Add this crackle issue to the agenda for the next meeting.

For discussion at this meeting. See notes below.

**3. PREVIOUS ACTION ITEM:** Greg will develop an Echolink project plan.

For discussion at this meeting. See notes below.

**4. PREVIOUS ACTION ITEM:** Jim agreed to create a “Buy, Sell, Swap” page within the Members section.

**ACTION:** Need to ask Jim to make it more visible.

**5. MOTION:** Tim moved (second Robert) that we ask Phil VE3HOA to take this equipment as he transitions to the role of Technical Director. Unanimously accepted.

**PREVIOUS ACTION ITEM:** Greg will ask Phil if he will take this equipment and store it.

Phil reported that he did get repeaters for storage from Graham.

6. CRRRA/STP history curation - Group discussion

Tim explained that he will be picking up the boxes from Wayne VE3JSQ by the end of September, and that he will schedule a ZOOM interview with Steve VE3KEG this fall.

Tim explained that this is delayed due to COVID.

**Moved (Tim) Seconded (James VE3KAW) that the minutes be accepted as presented. Unanimously accepted.**

**Project updates:**

Greg began by reviewing some recent accomplishments including funding for batteries for the packet station, cutover to the new VE3STP VHF FM repeater and the placement of the DMR repeater at Phil's for "rehabilitation."

## 1. STP VHF FM repeater plan &amp; status - Phil/Graham

Phil reported that the FM repeater seemed to be working fairly well, but over the last couple of weeks some noise/static noted. Phil doesn't believe that it's equipment problems but may be noise up at the site. Graham agreed that it's external.

Arrprior link still needs to be done (see notes below about YYX).

**ACTION:** Need to determine the source of the noise, but unless it becomes unusable, we'll wait until spring.

## 2. STP VHF DMR repeater plan &amp; status - Phil/Graham

Phil has it at his home. Removed it in case it interfered with the FM repeater over the winter when access would be difficult. It is operational, but very little use. Not always on. Filters needed quite a bit of work, and the radio needed to be cleaned (very dusty). Members are encouraged to contact Phil if they want to use it to test equipment, etc. Phil had looked into the DMR-MARC (Motorola Amateur Radio Club) network. MARC is a network that makes use of the built-in networking capability of the repeater, however the MARC system requires a specific firmware version which we do not have installed. Phil is reluctant to risk "bricking" the repeater at this point. Other networks are possible.

## 3. STP Site 1 Packet Digi – Graham

Greg (ECI) reported for Graham (AMN) because Graham's audio on Zoom wasn't working at the beginning of the meeting. Site 1 batteries were depleted and wouldn't make it through the winter. Decided to leave it at Site 1. VE3YX Bob secured funding through local townships (\$900) for the purchase of batteries to sustain the digi repeater because it plays a strategic role for emergency use in the Ottawa Valley (e.g., Atomic Energy's Chalk River connection to Ottawa). Allen (JGU) and Phil (HOA) installed the new batteries. James VE3KAW will arrange the reimbursement to Graham.

## 4. STP Site 2 Router Issue – Greg

TP-link router that Jeff (EFF) installed (for APRS digi, flight aware, Echolink) is having some issues with intermittent disconnects. It can still be accessed over the net for administration (e.g., rebooting). Greg is looking for suggestions. Should we replace it? If so, with what?

## 5. STP VHF FM RPI based EchoLink plan - Greg

Greg spoke with Steve (VE3KEG) who was tasked with getting Echolink running on a Raspberry Pi. No progress reported as yet. We still would like to move

Echolink from the PC to a Raspberry Pi. Given the weather, it is a project for the spring. Allen (JGU) will work with Greg (ECI) to prepare this. Allen noted that there are many parameters to set up, but the hardware is very similar to the APRS set up.

6. Site 2 additional antenna options for discussion – Greg  
 Greg brought this up because at the moment our APRS packet is operating off the “reference antenna” (Sinclair) that is not elevated as high as it could be. Need some tower sections to strap to the shack to get some elevation for some additional antennas. Phil (HOA) commented that we might want to review all of the antennas that are currently in use. For example, multiplexing the DMR radio with the current FM antenna may create problems. Greg acknowledged that this needs discussion but at another time, as it will take time to work through this.

**ACTION:** Greg will arrange a meeting of key stakeholders to consider the antennas.

7. YYX?  
 Greg once again raised the issue of the Arnprior UHF repeater that we had discussed linking to VE3STP. However, there seemed to be issues with the repeater itself before considering linking it. James (KAW) suggested that this be tabled until post-COVID. Unanimous agreement to wait on this.

### **Special initiatives update:**

1. Financials & Membership – James  
 James (KAW) reported a summary of the financial statement (current balance is \$2973.00). We had a recent donation as noted above for batteries of \$900 that will be used to reimburse Graham (AMN), so our working balance is a little over \$2K as we move into 2021. A key issue is that we had revenue in 2020 of \$410 for memberships and \$496 in expenses, so we’re operating at a deficit when considering memberships alone. There is a need for a “membership drive.”

Membership renewal is currently being advertised on the net. Seventeen memberships are up to date (plus two life memberships AAC and ECI). Need to be consistent on the renewal date of January 1<sup>st</sup>, because members have been renewing at various times throughout the year.

**ACTION:** Greg will email everyone on our mailing list to remind them that memberships are due and to encourage donations.

2. ARES update - Greg and Ed Tink VA3EJT  
 Greg introduced Ed (EJT) to the group as this was our first face-to-face meeting. Greg explained that VE3YX demonstrated how having strong relationships with townships is important as he secured funding for the batteries through the townships along the Ottawa valley. Ed (EJT) is connected to the Madawaska

township.

Ed has become interested in ARES and what is operating in the Ottawa Valley. The Township of Madawaska is not represented in any of the existing ARES relations with the clubs, but their website does indicate that they cooperate with ARES. Ed sent an email to the chief administration officer for the township asking if there was a designated ARES officer? As part of the review for 2021, the township will be reviewing all of the various positions, including ARES. Ed has worked with the township on various issues, so he is willing to continue discussion with the township to explore a more explicit ARES relationship.

3. DMR radio(s) club purchase potential – Greg  
Greg wondered if there was interest in purchasing a couple of DMR handhelds and hotspots that we could lend to members so they could experiment with DMR and evaluate whether they wanted to move in this direction. Need to see what our balance is after we complete the projects discussed above (e.g., antennas). The consensus was to inquire from club members if there was any interest and potentially supply radios on demand.
4. CRRRA/STP history curation - Group discussion  
Tim (PYC) and James (KAW) interviewed Steve (KEG) about his experiences with the CRRRA. The interview was recorded and is saved. We need to discuss what we will do with these data. We would like to interview VE3AAC, VE3AMN, VE3TAE and other members in the club to continue to flesh out the history of CRRRA.
5. STP site 1 lease situation and future plan - Group discussion  
Greg reported that the lease will expire in June of 2021, and that the property owner (Mrs. Edge) is deceased, so the future is uncertain because there is discussion of the land being sold for development (all second- or third-hand information at this point). Greg asked Graham if he had an update. Graham explained that years ago he obtained a copy of the lease, but that he hasn't been able to follow up with the township or others involved. Greg suggested we could contact the township to learn who the owner is. This issue will be discussed again at our spring meeting.
6. Social events - Place holder
7. AGM planning - Place holder

New business: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.