

Champlain Regional Repeater Association
Meeting of the Members & Executive

December 14, 2022
7 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Greg VE3ECI (Chair), Alan VA3IAH (Zoom host), Tim VA3PYC (note taker), James VE3KAW, Robert VA3AGN, Phil VE3HOA, Graham VE3AMN, Ed VA3EJT, Curt VE3ZN, Bob VE3YX, Cristian VA3CTQ, Greg VA3GMA, Lee, VA3CQD, Andy VA2WBT, Bill VE3TUC, Ron VE3RKB, Alan VE3VTT, Tyler VA3DGN

The agenda for the meeting was circulated via email.

Agenda

1. Club update - VE3ECI Greg
2. VE3STP FM repeater status - VE3HOA Phil
3. VE3STP Site 2 power rework - VE3AMN Graham
4. VE3YYX UHF repeater project - VE3EJT Ed
5. Round table – All
6. New Business

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Greg VE3ECI reviewed the agenda. All were in agreement with the agenda as presented.

Meeting Minutes

1. President's report

Welcome and Introductions:

Each member in attendance introduced themselves briefly.

Greg then began by thanking members for their continued support and welcomed new members that have joined us in 2022 with particular mention to those in attendance for the first time.

He then summarized our current finances noting that we have \$2585 (and change) as of Dec 12, 2022.

Insurance remains a significant annual expense: \$520 that we just paid.

An upcoming expense is that we will need to fund the STP2 power rework later in 2023 (see Item #3 below).

Year-to-date, we have 33 CRRRA Members in good standing.

Will be making another appeal for dues and donations early in the new year.

Greg welcomed others to suggest new projects for the year ahead. (See Ron's VE3RKB report below as an example)

Special thanks to Phil, Graham and Ed for their technical contribution to repeater site operations.

Evening nets:

The evening nets are an important social network to influence club membership and interest in the hobby.

Greg noted his continued appreciation for the efforts of our net controllers.

In terms of the weekly net, Greg also reminded everyone that Sunday is open. If anyone is interested in giving net control a try for standby, part time, full time or one time, let us know.

Finally, Greg noted a request by Matt VA3AL to investigate enabling the *champlainrepeater.ca* web forum and create a sub forum to post equipment offers and wants. (Note: Lee VA3CQD used the Chat function in Zoom to ask if this was currently available, to which Greg explained it was not.)

Greg closed by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2023.

2. VE3STP FM repeater status - VE3HOA Phil

Phil VE3HOA discussed the interference on the repeater over the past year. One of the sources was the duplexer that was being used, and Phil replaced this around Christmas last year. Some problems still remained, and Phil has worked on these throughout the year, including cleaning connections, etc. At the moment, the repeaters are working well, which is good because winter will soon make access difficult.

Phil noted that he is involved in both the Almonte and Perth clubs helping them with their repeaters. He has also been working on a project at the YMCA location in Ottawa. More of this will be presented at a future meeting.

3. VE3STP Site 2 power rework - VE3AMN Graham

Graham VE3AMN reported that the power situation at both STP sites has been unfinished business for various reasons. At site 2, we have free power, but not at site 1 (which runs on batteries charged by solar panels). What we do at these sites has evolved, particularly at site 2 where we're running 3 repeaters. Earlier this year, power fluctuations caused repeater failures. This has led to further consideration of how to address this issue, including the physical layout of the shack which now has three racks for the existing power supplies, radios, filters, etc. For Phase 1 of his work, Graham has built a triple-gauge power cable for each of the three existing racks, and this harness will supply power to each rack. The next phase of this work will include updating the fuse types (to blade fuses) and stabilizing the power. Questions followed including whether we've had any issues with low voltage. We do not, but there are other related to stability that need to be addressed.

4. VE3YYX UHF repeater project - VE3EJT Ed

Ed explained that he took a personal interest in setting up a repeater after visiting Phil's QTH, but soon realized that a new repeater may be an asset to the CRRRA more generally. Given that VE3YYZ in Arnprior was dormant, it was decided to use this repeater for the new installation at Ferguson Lake. Ed presented a topographic map to show everyone the proposed location on his family property. The height is lower than STP Site 2, but has a clear view of the Ottawa Valley off to Renfrew, and there is a direct line of sight from the proposed new repeater site to STP site 2. Ed then showed photographs of the repeater build to date with radios and filters on a rack, the current build of the controller and radio linking on a bread board, as well as the antenna being used to test the system at his home QTH. Ed explained how he salvaged the old ZRR tower with Phil VE3HOA's help as the tower climber. He will use this tower with sections of a Delta tower that Tim VA3PYC gave him at his new site. Ed explained that he'll use an array of folded dipole antennas as we use at the STP sites and similar solar panels as used on STP Site 1 to charge the batteries for the new station. His plan is to do this work spring/summer 2023. Ron VE3RKB offered to help with the tower next spring.

5. Round table – All (only notes provided for those who made additional comments)

Ron VE3RKB summarized radio work that he did in conjunction with a motorcycle event, with over 200 riders from the U.S. and Canada, in the Calabogie area last fall. They used the Lavant and STP repeaters providing excellent coverage. Ron is proposing that we could take this on as a project with the CRRRA.

Tyler VA3DGN reported on his work in and around Perth. He briefly discussed his work with DMR, the codeplugs and CHIRP programming tricks, and he provided a link to his work with CHIRP at: <https://github.com/tylert/freq-lists>

Alan VE3VTT reported on his work mapping all the repeaters from Pembroke to Brockville and Kingston. It's a comprehensive and interactive map. Alan requested that Greg distribute the map to members after the meeting for any input as he is doing a revision soon.

Phil VE3HOA presented slides highlighting projects at his home QTH as well as pictures of the STP site. Phil closed by noting that Site 1 could accommodate Ed's UHF repeater project next spring until he has his tower up. Phil has a 20-watt duplexer that might work well in the cramped space of Site 1.

Bob VE3YX noted that STP packet is an important resource for Renfrew West in case of an emergency. Graham VE3AMN added that any further RMS nodes in the area might be best placed near Smith's Falls where there is a confluence of fiber.

Robert VA3AGN thanked the chair and Zoom host and echoed other members' thanks for an interesting series of presentations.

Lee VA3CQD noted his appreciation for meeting members face-to-face and for learning about the various projects that are going on.

Bill VE3TUC commented on antennas with the Renfrew OPP near the McDonalds that came out of the STP resources about 10 years ago. These antennas are operational with great coverage of Renfrew, but there is no interest with the OPP to use these. We may want to consider recovering these assets.

Graham VE3AMN summed up the evening meeting nicely by saying that this is a great group of people and he's happy to be part of it. Tim VA3PYC echoed this with his own thanks for the work done by Graham VE3AMN and Phil VE3HOA. He also noted how much he appreciated Ed's slides which included his breadboard build of his new repeater. These sorts of projects are an interest to many members who are trying to acquire skills in electronics.

Finally Allan VA3IAH expressed his own thanks and said he too had taken copious notes with many new projects on his mind.

6. There was no new business.

Greg thanked the group again, and **the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.**