

Charlottetown Amateur Radio Club

President

Bill McMaster VY2WM

Secretary

Vice-President

Treasurer

Julia Ashworth VY2JA

Joel MacNeill VY2KW

Charles Easter VY2CE

Minutes of July 4, 2023 meeting

Bill VY2WM called the meeting to order at around 7:06 PM.

Members present were:

Bill McMaster VY2WM

Charles Easter VY2CE

Brent Taylor VY2HF

Joel MacNeill VY2KW

William Caw VY2CAW

Rick Hews VY2WTF

Tracy Allen VY2TAZ

Tyler MacNeill VY2TM

Ron MacKay VE1AIC

Ricardo Angel VY2AN

Gordon Bernard VY2GB

Bushra Bashir VY2BBK

Michael McNeill VY2MG

Micah Gallant VY2MIC

Arden Gallant VY2ALG

Conall Gibson VY2CG

Bryan Dickie VY2BD

Jeannine Fraser VY2JF

Michael Morrison VY2CO

Brian Gorgeatt VY2BG

Fraser Ashworth VY2FA

Julia Ashworth VY2JA

Richard Burke VY2RB and Bill Glydon VY2LI sent their apologies.

Bill VY2WM asked if there were any sick or silent keys. Julia VY2JA mentioned that Rob MacDonald VY2ROB of Stratford had been recorded as a silent key in the July/Aug RAC magazine. He had passed away a while back in 2022. Joel mentioned that Richard VY2RB was settling in at Geneva Villas and was resting up a little after his move.

Announcements:

None noted.

Minutes of June 6, 2023 meeting:

Bill VY2WM advised that since the minutes for last month's meeting had been emailed to all members there was no need for the secretary to read them. Moved by Rick VY2WTF, seconded by William VY2CAW to approve the minutes as circulated. Motion carried.

Business arising from the minutes:

Nothing noted.

President report:

Bill VY2WM reported that he had recently attended the second NGO (Non-Government Organization) council meeting which is under the authority of the PEI EMO. The club is a member of the council thanks to the efforts of William VY2CAW. Other NGOs in attendance were the Canadian Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance, Search & Rescue, and Samaritan's Purse. While the RAC represents the amateur radio community on the federal level, the CARC does so at the provincial level. At this most recent quarterly meeting in June, Bill VY2WM gave an update on the club's activities, such as Field Day, the SMART convention, and our study courses that have enabled a record number of new hams to be qualified. Another Basic study course is planned for the Fall. Bill also informed the NGO council that the Winlink Gateway was now in a room adjacent to the EOC (Emergency Operations Centre) in Charlottetown.

The key question that was raised at the meeting was what the council and by extension the PEI EMO actually wanted to do. What would be the specific roles of the various NGOs during an emergency situation? In order to address this question, it was decided to organize a high level tabletop exercise that would clarify what exactly each NGO's capabilities were and how to utilize them in conjunction with one another. The PEI EMO put forward the idea to set up a symposium either later this year or next year that would consist of all the NGO's and that would be open to the public to learn more about it.

Bill VY2WM continued his report with an update on the Winlink gateway that is now in a room next to the EOC in Charlottetown. Some testing revealed that despite its location on the 6th floor the range is poor. At some point during the test the gateway became unresponsive. Bill investigated the situation and discovered that the radio itself was fine, but that the internet came through the EMO's WIFI. On that particular day, the internet had gone down and when it had reconnected the gateway didn't get back in. Bill managed to fix the problem. However, the SWR reading was 3:1 and upon inspection of the 210C2 VHF loop antenna Bill discovered that there was a ding in it. He plans to have a look at it.

While at the EMO office, Bill VY2WM had a look at the equipment on site. He will assist in setting up the VHF/UHF station.

At this point, Tracey VY2TAZ brought up the subject of "Exercise Handshake". Bill VY2WM explained that Exercise Handshake was a monthly exercise that takes place every last Tuesday of the month. During the exercise, all of the maritimes are connected via MAVCOM and amateurs are invited to join with the regional EOCs. The idea behind this 2m net is to test the capabilities of all radio operators in the maritimes. Conall VY2CG mentioned that there was also an HF setup in Halifax. For more information, please check out this link:

<https://www.westcumb.ca/exercise-handshake>.

Bill VY2WM explained that to date PEI hasn't been too involved in this. However, some individuals in Nova Scotia would like to increase our participation and so have contacted Bill. The idea is to give us a presentation on Exercise Handshake, possibly via Zoom at the next August meeting. Bill will ask Rodney VY2CGA if the Summerside club would like to join in.

At this point, William VY2CAW raised the concern that we may not be ready for something like Exercise Handshake. The first thing to do would be to set up radios and then train people. Bill replied that in any case it would be interesting to find out more about Exercise Handshake. We can go from there and any person used would be trained.

Treasurer report:

Charles VY2CE reported that the total income for the period from January to the end of June 2023 was \$2,166.75. In total 24 amateurs have paid their dues for the current year; all students are free for 2023. The total expenses for the reporting period were \$907.60. However, not all

invoices related to Field Day have been received. One of those is the invoice for the additional insurance. Julia VY2JA mentioned that she'd been told by the RAC that the letter with the invoice had been sent at the beginning of June. Julia will write to the RAC to follow up.

Charles VY2CE explained that officially any member who had not paid their dues for 2023 by June 30, 2023 would no longer be a member. He will continue to give a grace period of one (1) to two (2) weeks into July. By the middle of July we have to report to the RAC who our active members are.

Moved by Charles VY2CE, seconded by Rick VY2WTF that the financial report be approved. All in favour, motion carried.

Field Day Committee Report:

Brian VY2BG who'd attended the Darnley Field Day reported that Darryl VY2OM had got there days early to get started with the setup. Brian VY2BG, Bill VY2WM, and Doug VY2DS arrived early to help put up the towers. They had a 30 ft tower with an Explorer 14 at the top. Something went wrong at some point and the tower came down. Fortunately, no one was injured and the Explorer 14 sustained only a little damage that could be fixed. The tower itself was ok, but one of the pipes was bent. They later encountered some coaxial issues, which they were able to fix. As for the bands, Brian reported that this year they weren't great so that not many contacts could be made. He made the suggestion that, going forward, for next year's Field Day we should come together again as one group.

Ricardo VY2AN reported that Brent VY2HF, Bill VY2WM, Rick VY2WTF, and Micah VY2MIC had arrived early to help with setup. While not a lot of contacts were made on the air during Field Day, there were many visitors. The Mayor of Charlottetown and two MLAs attended on Saturday. A lot of great PR took place with some people expressing interest in our Basic course. Ricardo added that Field Day was the first time for a number of newer hams to make their first HF contacts and their first log entries. While Sunday was a little washed out, Brent VY2HF managed to contact the International Space Station. In summary, there were not a lot of QSOs and points, but it was a great success for public relations. As for learning from this experience, Ricardo suggested that an FT8 on a QRP might have helped with contacts. Bill

VY2WM considered that instead of using verticals, horizontals might have been better. He mentioned being able to work Hungary on FT8 on 5 watts.

Bill VY2WM reminded the members that the Victoria Park effort had been completely battery powered, while the Darnley event was a traditional field day setup.

William VY2CAW mentioned how he had told MLA Peter Bevan-Baker, who is his neighbour, that the Victoria Park event was very green and that as an MLA for the Green Party he should really attend it. Which he did. Mr. Bevan-Baker was so impressed with what he learned about amateur radio and its potential that the very next day he started on his Proposal for the House.

Repeater Update:

Ron VE1AIC reported that the company who owns one of the repeater sites needed to upgrade it. Ron himself had contributed \$400 toward the work three years ago, but so far nothing had happened.

The Belfast site is behind schedule with the renovations, but all going well it should be ready at some point in the Fall.

There is a possibility that the company that owns the Glen Valley site would allow us to use their tower in Morrell.

Ron VY2AIC is hoping to find some more repeater sites; he currently has a number of repeaters just waiting to go up somewhere. He himself doesn't have a lot of contacts anymore, but if anybody knows of a suitable location, please let him know. A garage or barn would also work.

The UPEI building in St. Peters Bay was mentioned. Tracey VY2TAZ suggested reception aka warming centres, as they have backup power. Ron asked if the information on the centres was publicly available, which Tracey confirmed. She said she would put the information on our Discord channel. William VY2CAW commented that having a warming centre as our location would be very helpful during emergencies.

Gordon VY2GB suggested contacting fire departments as they often have tall towers. Rick VY2WTF explained that fire departments tend to be very individual and not connected. He added that while fire departments have radios not many know how to use them. Bill VY2WM

suggested that we might be able to get involved with fire departments to help them with equipment setup. Michael VY2CO added that the club might also offer a presentation on what radio is and what it can do.

Correspondence:

Julia VY2JA reported that the club's meeting notes and newsletter were now also published on the [Internet Archive](#). The site is part of the Digital Library of Amateur Radio & Communications (DLARC) project. The archive offers full-text search on all issues using the search "text contents" field. It's also possible to sort them by publication date by clicking "Date Published".

Julia VY2JA read out a brief email message from Bill VY2LI regarding the setting up of a high school ham radio credit program in PEI. He pointed us toward the RAC's Youth on the Air program. In addition to his own research into the matter, Bill VY2LI suggested that the club should make contact with the Provincial Dept. of Education to raise awareness for the upcoming high school semester.

Tracey VY2TAZ mentioned that one of the people who were very interested in our courses was a science teacher. He hopes to eventually teach his students about radio. Maybe this person could be a contact person to help us set up a high school credit program. Tracey has his wife's phone number.

Bill VY2WM reported that an email arrived from a lady in Moncton whose radio amateur father recently went silent key. She has some equipment she would like to sell. Julia VY2JA is to email the members with the details.

Ron VE1AIC mentioned that he had an old power supply spare.

New/Ongoing Business:

Good Samaritans Law / Volunteers Liabilities Act:

Bill VY2WM reported that the PR contacts that were made in Victoria Park included a person who was in the military, a science teacher and his wife, and Mayor Philip Brown. MLA Peter-Bevan Baker was also very interested in what we were doing and what we could

potentially bring to the emergency response in PEI. During Fiona, we were able to continue to communicate, but were never called to assist. Mr. Bevan-Baker was shocked.

Bill VY2WM told Mr. Bevan-Baker about the liability issues that amateur radio operators face during emergencies. In other provinces they have what's called a Good Samaritan law, which legally protects a private individual who steps up to help during an emergency from any liability. PEI doesn't have such a law, which makes it difficult for amateurs to provide useful assistance.

Tracey VY2TAZ explained that we have the Volunteers Liability Act in PEI. Various groups are specifically mentioned as being covered by this act, but amateur radio operators are not. Tracey's suggestion is to request an amendment to the Act. We should also ask for an amendment to the Emergencies Measures Act. As this can take a long time to go through, we should in the meantime ask the Hon. Bloyce Thompson for a minister's order. This is a very quick thing the Minister could issue and it would immediately exempt us from liability until the legislation has been formally amended.

Government Funding and New Club Station:

Bill VY2WM continued to report that the MLA Jamie Fox also attended Field Day at Victoria Park. Mr. Fox used to be a police officer and was also in the military. He is not currently a minister. Mr. Fox asked if the CARC was a not-for-profit organization because for those organizations there is provincial money available for equipment purchase. It's something like 75% (75c/\$1). Bill VY2WM told Mr. Fox that we really needed a club station. MLA Fox told Bill that we could contact him and he would see what he could do.

Bill VY2WM also asked Mayor Brown if he could help us find a suitable club home. Bill said he would follow up with both of them.

At this point, Rick VY2WTF informed the club that due to him being French-Canadian he had close connections to the Carrefour de l'Isle-Saint-Jean, the French school in Charlottetown. The school has a lot of suitable space. Rick has spoken to the relevant persons within the school and they would be interested in forming an agreement whereby we would offer courses or other activities in exchange for space. There would be no monetary cost. One of the

requirements the school has stipulated would be the addition of French to our material. Bill VY2WM and Rick VY2WTF are to put together a proposal to the school.

Ron VE1AIC said that the advantage of using a warming centre as a club station would be their backup power. While some want payment, others would be free.

Brent VY2HF added as an advantage of the Carrefour that it would provide the perfect location for classes. Although we have been told that we can use the Red Cross building for our courses any time, this is not based on any kind of contractual agreement. It's a personal go-ahead by the person in charge that could be taken away at any time.

William VY2CAW mentioned that St. John's Ambulance who are near the UPS store said that we could use their space.

Charles VY2CE voiced his concern regarding the Carrefour because it was at another school - Colonel High School - where out of the blue the club was told to vacate the premises within two weeks.

Club Hardware Spreadsheet:

The spreadsheet was emailed out to all members alongside the meeting agenda. Bill VY2WM is to expand more on the subject at the August meeting. In the meantime and in summary, the club owns a lot of good equipment including some brand new items from the EMO. At some point, hopefully by next month, we will have to decide what we want to keep and what to sell. Brent VY2HF is going to attend the Moncton flea market in September. If we can have prices added to the equipment, Brent could take the stuff down with him to sell it. Gordon VY2GB suggested putting the items on the club website and allowing people to bid on the items.

Buffalo Aircraft Activation:

The remaining Buffalo aircraft are to be activated all across Canada at the end of July. This activity will take place in conjunction with the Summerside club. Doug VY2DS is planning on taking an HF rig down to the site near Summerside. Anyone is welcome to attend. Bill VY2WM suggested car pooling to drive down.

Fox Hunt:

A fox hunt is definitely on the cards for this summer. Brent VY2HF is waiting for some good weather on a Saturday morning. It'll be very short notice. Brent will hide the fox and members are to search for it using their 2m radios. A directional antenna would be helpful.

Flea Market:

Bill VY2WM suggested holding a local flea market at some point this summer. If someone brings a BBQ, we could make an afternoon of it. We could advertise the event on our website. Gordon VY2GB suggested the school at York Point in Cornwall as a possible location. Charles VY2CE thought that there would likely be a fee associated with that.

Wordpress Plugin for Website:

Micah VY2MIC requested the club's approval to purchase a Wordpress plugin for our website that would allow him to tidy our many files and meeting notes. It would make our archive easier to navigate. The plugin would cost a one-time fee of \$46.27.

Moved by Julia VY2JA, seconded by Fraser VY2FA to approve the purchase of the Wordpress plugin. All in favour, motion carried.

Equipment for Sale by Bryan VY2BD:

Joel VY2HF passed around a list of items that Bryan VY2BD would like to sell. Julia VY2JA is to email the details to the membership after the meeting. The list has also been posted on the Discord channel.

Bill VY2WM adjourned the meeting at 8:48 PM. William VY2CAW seconded it.

Julia Ashworth
Secretary

Bill McMaster
President