

Charlottetown Amateur Radio Club

President

Bill McMaster VY2WM

Secretary

Vice-President

Treasurer

Julia Ashworth VY2JA

Joel MacNeill VY2KW

Charles Easter VY2CE

Minutes of January 2, 2024 meeting

Bill VY2WM called the meeting to order at around 7:30 PM.

Members present were:

Bill McMaster VY2WM

Brent Taylor VY2HF

Micah Gallant VY2MIC

Ron MacKay VE1AIC

Ricardo Angel VY2AN

Maggie MacEachern VY2MMM

Selina MacArthur VY2OL

Brian Gorveatt VY2BG

Andrew Jorgensen VY2HZ

Fraser Ashworth VY2FA

Solomon Kappala VY2SK

Aaron Boeker VY2EK

Graeme Brown VY2WT

Rick Hews VY2WTF

Joel MacNeill VY2KW

Richard Burke VY2RB

Arden Gallant VY2ALG

Tyler MacNeill VY2TM

Charles Easter VY2CE

Darrell MacArthur VY2OM

Omair Imitaz VY2PE

Elizabeth Jorgensen VY2KV

Michael Morrison VY2CO

Julia Ashworth VY2JA

Devin Garlick VY2DFG

Aaron Shelvey VY2DIY

Bruce Maclean VY2BM

Bill Glyden VY2LI, Tracey Allen VY2TAZ, and Mike McNeill VY2MG sent their regrets.

Bill VY2WM said that it was great to see Richard VY2RB and Michael VY2CO back with us. Tracey VY2TAZ and Mike VY2MG were feeling under the weather and had decided to stay home so as not to pass anything on to anybody. Bill asked if anybody was aware of any silent keys. None known.

Announcements:
None noted.

Minutes of November 7, 2023 meeting:

Bill VY2WM advised that since the minutes for the last members' meeting had been emailed to all members there was no need for the secretary to read them. Moved by Rick VY2WTF, seconded by Graeme VY2WT to approve the minutes as circulated. All approved, motion carried.

Business arising from the minutes:
Nothing noted.

President report:

Bill VY2WM started off his report with a recap of 2023. He said he was very proud of what we'd managed to accomplish as a club in the last 12 months. The following list is in no particular order.

We managed to successfully hold a spring and fall course. In total, 30 new hams received their licences in the last 12 months. Bill thanked Brent VY2HF for leading the charge and Joel VY2KW for helping to teach both cohorts. He also thanked the Red Cross for their hospitality in allowing us to use their space.

Richard VY2RB asked if there would be any more courses this year, to which Bill replied that Brent VY2HF would cover that in his report a little later.

The next item was the flea market which we held at the Sherwood Recreation Hall in October 2023. It was the first time in quite some time and turned out to be a great success.

Also in October, the club held an equipment sale. After having reviewed the club's equipment, a list was made that identified any surplus items. The initial sale took place at the October meeting and allowed new hams to buy radio equipment at good prices. Anything that didn't sell was offered to the public at the flea market.

In January 2023, Ricardo VY2AN set up a station for Winter Field Day. It was a great success so that he will be organizing winter field day as more of a club activity this year. More info to follow.

Summer Field Day 2023 involved two separate activities. The results were mixed, but overall it was a success.

Throughout 2023, Ricardo VY2AN was essentially leading the charge in POTA activities. He has managed to encourage a number of other members to also participate (such as Micah VY2MIC, Tracey VY2TAZ, and Aaron VY2EK).

The new emergency protocol that was activated during hurricane Lee was a great success. Bill shared it with PEI EMO who gave him very positive feedback.

In the latter half of 2023, Bill sent a letter to the director of the Carrefour to inquire about the possibility of having a permanent club station at the school. So far we have not heard anything back. At this point, Rick VY2WTF explained that shortly after Bill had sent the letter, a new director had started so that everything was delayed. Rick recommended that we should send a follow up letter in the new year now. Bill VY2WM agreed to do that.

Bill continued the recap by saying that during 2023, in his position as Club President and RAC Section Manager, he had participated in four to five NGO meetings hosted by PEI EMO. Bill has managed to raise our profile with the various emergency organizations. They are all aware of us now and what we can bring to the table during various emergency situations.

The club has now been meeting in Stratford for a number of years. Bill has managed to secure the venue for another year. When COVID first hit, the club was "homeless", so we're very glad to be able to have this space at the Stratford town hall free of charge.

Ron VE1AIC with the assistance of Rick VY2WTF has done some tremendous work on the repeater network. Ron will give an update a little later. Bill expressed his thanks and appreciation; we're indeed very privileged to have such a fantastic repeater system.

As for other club activities, the club holds two weekly VHS nets on Wednesdays and Saturdays as well as one HF net on Thursdays. We also have a monthly simplex net on 2 meters. These regular local nets really glue the club together. Although the new courses have brought new members to the club, the camaraderie we grow and nurture through the weekly nets has played a major role in increasing our membership threefold over the past year or so.

Finally, the holiday social supper that we enjoyed in December 2023 was a great success.

Overall, 2023 was a busy year for the club. Going forward, we'll try harder to have regular information exchange sessions at the end of our monthly meetings.

Looking forward to 2024, Bill raised the following points:

Winter Field Day will take place at the end of January 2024.

Ricardo VY2AN and Micah VY2MIC will lead the event as a club activity. They'll be waiting for more info on the weather conditions, before finalizing any plans. In the meantime, they'll be organizing the event on Discord. Julia VY2AN will also email any important information to the membership. Ricardo VY2AN said that there would be two stations - a 20m and a 10m - , but if anyone wanted to set up another station they'd be welcome to do so. Anyone in the Charlottetown area should be able to participate with just a handheld. Micah VY2MIC added that the main focus of the event would be to have fun.

Regarding Summer Field Day, Bill said that we'd start planning for that in a month or two. Brent VY2HF said that Field Day always took place on the 4th weekend in June.

Bill reminded the club that there would be a total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. That will be an exciting event for radio transmissions.

EMO communications were also on the list of things for 2024.

Tracey VY2TAZ had sent Bill a suggestion to set up a loaner library for newly licensed hams to get them on the air immediately. Bill thought that this was an excellent suggestion and added that so far club members had stepped forward on an individual basis. Bill said he was very impressed by that, but suggested that it may be a good idea for the club to officially buy some radios that could be loaned out.

At this point, Rick VY2WTF reminded Bill of an email he had received from a company called Retevis. Their radios are generally of good quality. They asked in their email if we would be willing to promote their brand in exchange for free equipment.

Bill said that he didn't really like the idea of promoting a particular brand. Omair VY2PE asked whether Bill would feel the same way about Yaesu or Icom. Bill replied that at first glance perhaps not, but he would think about it carefully before agreeing to anything no matter what the brand was.

Ricardo VY2AN said that such promotions were usually just short-term, so he would likely go ahead. At this point, Ron VE1AIC showed the club his own Retevis which he'd bought for his toolkit. He said they weren't very expensive so we wouldn't really need a free-equipment deal. He said that his Retevis was good quality and clean. He'd checked it on a spectrum analyzer. Ron said that it wasn't his #1 radio, but it was certainly a solid, good-quality-for-the-money piece of equipment. Ron suggested that we might want to ask for a bulk discount.

Rick VY2WTF suggested also asking them what exactly the proposal contained. Perhaps it would simply involve an honest review from our side. Omair VY2PE added that as a radio club we couldn't be partial. Bill VY2WM agreed that he would make contact with Retevis to request more information about the proposal and to ask them about the possibility of bulk discounts.

Another suggestion that Tracey VY2TAZ had emailed to Bill VY2WM was called "train the trainer class". Bill wasn't quite sure what exactly she meant by that. Perhaps it was about training some of the newer hams to feel comfortable co-teaching the club's basic licensing courses. Michael VY2CO thought that Tracey might have meant teachers in the public school system. By teaching them more about amateur radio, they could pass that information on to

their students. Bill agreed that that made sense. We would have to confirm with Tracey exactly what her idea was.

Bill reminded the club that we'd had a successful soldering workshop at the library about a year ago. Fraser VY2FA did a great job leading it. It was free and we had some members from the public join in. Bill asked if we would like to hold another workshop at the library. It would have to be open to the public again.

Micah VY2MIC suggested having an "introduction to amateur radio" session. Bill liked the idea and suggested that one of the conference rooms that the library offered for a fee might be a suitable location. We could have radios on a table for show-and-tell. Bill suggested that the best timing might actually be a week or so before Summer Field Day.

Bill VY2WM put forward the idea of a club BBQ this summer. The response was very positive.

Bill continued saying that our #1 priority for 2024 would be to find a permanent club home. We have reached out to the Carrefour, but if anybody else has any suggestions, please let us know.

Bill then brought up the subject of a more formalized way to stream our club meetings for members who, at least for part of the year, live outside of the province. There is, for example, Arthur VY2BIT in Florida and Brian VE1BAC in New Brunswick. A more formalized method of streaming would enable such members to be involved in our monthly club meetings.

Micah VY2MIC said that he had streamed the annual meeting earlier, but had shut it down once Bushra VY2BBK had to leave as she was the only one watching it. Micah said that he could stream our meetings via Discord.

Rick VY2WTF said that he had Microsoft Teams that could be used. He said it had better throughput. You can share and have multiple webcams focusing on different people. Rick said that Teams would be more configurable than Discord. We could do webcam meetings as well as have a dial-in number. It was decided that Micah VY2MIC and Rick VY2WTF would work together on this.

At this point, Omair VY2PE suggested that we might want to hold quarterly mock communications to have regular practice. Bill agreed and said that Ron VE1AIC had voiced the same thought. We had great participation during Hurricane Lee. As a club, we will have to decide whether we want to wait for the next storm or set up regular mock tests.

Treasurer report:

Charles VY2CE reported that we had never before had prepaid memberships. We now have three who at the end of 2023 had prepaid for 2024. Although all dues for 2024 are due now, members have a few months grace. RAC members receive a discount as the insurance premium is higher for non-RAC members.

Charles said that we currently had no dual members with the Summerside club. There is a miscellaneous expense in the accounts, which is a small amount that was owed to the Summerside club but has now been repaid.

Dues for 2023 was \$630. Prepaid dues, i.e. paid in 2023 for 2024, were \$80. Amounts received from course tuition was \$1,300. Donations received during 2023 amount to \$345.90. Revenue from the equipment sale totalled \$1,433, and income from entrance and table sales at the flea market was \$220. Revenue from the sale of study guides during 2023 was \$1,200. All together, the income from all activities during 2023 totalled \$5,208.90.

On the expenditure side, donations totalled \$400, field day expenses were \$92.05, the purchase of study guides \$1223.38, insurance \$393.14, PEI companies fee \$20, office supplies \$73.86, and the rental for the Sherwood Recreation Hall \$181.13. This totalled \$2,453.26, giving rise to a net surplus for 2023 of \$2,756.

At this point, Charles pointed out that the insurance fee of \$393.14 was lower than it should be, as the RAC had miscalculated. Both Charles VY2CE and Julia VY2JA have not received a reply to their queries. They will be waiting until the insurance policy comes through to see if there are any changes.

Charles reported a total bank balance of \$4,096.56 and cash of \$21.86, giving a total funds balance of \$4,118.42. There is still an old chequing account included in the total bank balance which Charles might close down.

Micah VY2MIC asked on behalf of new members what the club insurance was for. Charles VY2CE replied that it was liability insurance for the club, even if the activity was private. Julia VY2JA confirmed on the RAC website that RAC members who are members of the club also have their personal activities insured. This is not the case for non-RAC members.

<https://www.rac.ca/insurance/>

Julia VY2JA asked Charles VY2CE if the dues for 2024 were the same as for 2023. Charles confirmed that they were the same.

Julia then asked if students from the Spring 2023 course would be exempt from the 2024 dues. Charles VY2CE thought that they might be. Bill VY2WM explained that students on the Spring 2023 course became members in March 2023. They had free membership for the entire year 2023. For 2024, regular club dues would apply. However, any students who attended the Fall 2023 course would be exempt for 2024.

Omar VY2PE asked about the equipment insurance that is offered by the RAC. Julia VY2JA is to look into it and get back to him.

Charles VY2CE concluded his report by thanking the executive for the work. He also thanked Brent VY2HF, Bill VY2WM, and Joel VY2KW for tirelessly teaching three courses. Charles thanked the members for not hackling him when something didn't run quite as smoothly as hoped. He wished everybody a happy new year 2024.

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

Rick VY2WTF asked if there were any COAX study guides that hadn't been sold yet. Bill VY2WM replied yes. Omar VY2PE said that someone had borrowed a study guide from the Red Cross, who would like to have the book returned, please.

Committee Reports:

Training/Education:

Brent VY2HF reported that the final exam had gone well. 11 students including Aaron VY2EK, who had studied on his own, had passed so far. Some of the students have not yet written their exam and others would like to improve their marks. Brent said that they could write any time. One person from the Fall 2023 course had deferred until the spring due to work commitments.

Brent said that he had a number of people who were already interested in a Spring 2024 course. He is hoping for a break before the Spring course starts. Brent said that he would suggest continuing with two classes a week, provided that more teachers could be found. It's very hard work for only Brent VY2HF, Bill VY2WM, and Joel VY2KW to be teaching these courses. There should be a number of members in the club who could also teach some of the classes.

Brent reported that the Exam Standard Committee was introducing a new question bank to ISED this week. In about one year it should be approved. The Exam Committee will be starting work on the Advanced question bank next.

Regarding the Spring 2024 course, Brent suggested a late March, early April start date to avoid snow days. He hopes that the club can renew their agreement with the Red Cross.

Bill VY2WM said that he would like to have a venue for the course confirmed before approaching the library about an info session.

Brent continued that there was an unmet need within the club for the Advanced licence and Morse code. It'd be great if those needs could be met. Micah VY2MIC said that he had great success learning CW through the Long Island CW Club (<https://longislandcwclub.org/>). It is only about \$50 CAD per year. You can take as many online classes as you want.

Micah said that, regarding the Spring Course, he could reach out to the homeschoolers. He will also update the website for the Spring 2024 basic course.

Bill VY2WM asked how many members would be interested in taking their advanced exam. Many hands went up. Bill and Brent suggested that we could have a fall study group for the Advanced licence. This group would study independently, then meet once a month to ask questions and get help where needed. There would likely not be a basic licensing course in the fall.

Solomon VY2SK said that the RAC offered free online advanced courses for Maple Leaf members.

Repeater Update:

Ron VE1AIC reported that overall everything was pretty stable at the moment. Belfast is the main project. There are two boxes, one in Rick VY2WTF's shed and one in Ron's garage. The receiver is on the tower. UHF works and is linked to the CRA repeater. Ron said that any antenna taller than 20ft would need a professional in the spring. He hopes that the Belfast repeater will be up to speed by then; a weather station is then to be connected.

Ron said that the Glen Valley repeater was working so-so. There was a big hole in the wall with rain coming in, so that Ron had to fix it before being able to do anything else. The owner then put his own stuff on top of Ron's so that at the moment there is no more space for extra repeaters. The Glen Valley repeater is not at optimum, but it's certainly better than nothing. Ron said it would do well once it's cleaned up.

Ron said that the CRA repeater was now a compact repeater. He has enough equipment to be able to replace all 7 repeaters should they all somehow fail at the same time. This gives us a solid level of redundancy.

Ron's winter project is going to be Winlink. Sound cards are nowadays built into radios. Ron is interested in the use of wider Winlink networks without any reliance on the internet.

Correspondence:

None at this time.

New/Ongoing Business:

None noted.

Rick VY2WTF, seconded by Omair VY2PE, adjourned the meeting at 9:09 PM.

Julia Ashworth
Secretary

Bill McMaster
President