



Executive Minutes February 7, 2020

Via telephone conference bridge

Note: Except for motions made and carried, this is not an exact transcript, but an attempt to capture the ideas of the discussion.

In attendance:

Troy Michel VA6TNA President, John Allen VA6SJA Secretary, Paul Wilson VA6PW Director, Doug Howard VE6CID Director, Brian Crissal VE6BCA Director, Perry Afaganis VA6PTA Treasurer, Garry Jacobs VE6CIA Membership Coordinator

Call to Order

President Troy called the meeting to order at 19:05 MST.

Adoption of Minutes of Last Meeting

Brian VE6BCA moved to adopt the minutes of the Executive Meeting of September 22, 2019 as presented on the SARA web site. Carried.

Old Business

Discussion of Calgary Flea Market

Doug VE6CID reported that 219 people attended. There were hot dogs outside. Comments were received that it was quite busy. The Filipino group set up the tables. It was hard to keep people around for cleanup. It went well.

Secretary John indicated that Doug deserved a lot of credit for the work he did. The vendors at the tables organized themselves because the coordinator (me) was several minutes late. The revenue from tables was \$340. John suggests more attention to planning the wrap up ceremonies, although Garry VE6CIA did a masterful job after being pressed into service at the last minute by Secretary John, in the absence of our president. John felt that the Flea Market went really well.

Doug VE6CID reported that CARA would be sponsoring a Flea Market on April 18.

Brian VE6BCA mentioned that tables in the February 8th Edmonton Flea Market were being "sold" for \$15, which may be becoming the new normal.

Doug VE6CID has found that higher table rent leads to fewer vendors and attendance. CARA will be charging \$10 at the Calgary Flea Market on April 18.

Perry VA6PTA reported that the rent for the Edmonton flea market would be between \$1300 to \$1400. And the last 2 NARC flea markets have barely broken even, and most previous ones have probably lost money. He also noted that NARC is holding this flea market as a service

If Pastor Ron Leach VE6TV and/or Doug VE6CID were not involved, CARA, SARA and any others would have to pay for staff to be at the church full time. This would add \$500 to the cost.

When should we have another Flea Market?

Brian VE6BCA mentioned that the only locations where we can have one are in Calgary, where there is a flea market in the spring and one in the fall. We think that CARA traditionally sponsors the spring one.

Doug VE6CID personally likes the idea of having a spring flea market and one in the fall in Calgary. He reports that Radioworld, who has been a sponsor, is getting saturated with requests from amateurs. We may have to search for other sponsors, maybe Westjet. He stated that SARA should continue sponsoring an annual fall Flea Market. We should include something that no one else will think of, especially something that would appeal to the younger generation.

Membership

Garry VE6CIA reported that there are 47 paid up members. Notices for 12 renewals due in February have been sent. Only 3 or 4 members renewed from about 15 notices sent in January.

There will be a SARA table at the February 8 Edmonton Flea Market.

Getting membership numbers back up

Attracting new members

John VA6SJA had become convinced of the value of SARA when he had lived in Edmonton and participated in exercises at the Provincial Operating Centre. He saw how SARA could connect a major part of Alberta the POC. There is an Alberta Simulated Emergency Test every October. Doug VE6CID organizes a couple of exercises every year. People hearing them in progress could be interested. Maybe we could mention something about SARA member support in any preamble to any net or exercise.

Doug VE6CID suggested that SARA doesn't do very much in the public eye. He suggested sponsoring some events. He suggested something fun for amateurs and families comparable to

sitting around the fire at the Red Deer Picnic. maybe SARA could do a unique event that would attract people. Members will come if they have fun.

Doug felt that SARA should continue providing hot dogs at Red Deer Picnic.

He suggests that when there are city festivals with hams involved, we could demonstrate that we can link the major cities.

There could be ragchews on the backbone showing that the repeaters can be linked all the way from Calgary to Edmonton and that the facility is busy.

Brian VE6BCA stated that this had been happening every Wednesday morning for the last 20 years (TransCanada VHF net).

President Troy stated that the cities are also being connected together on Sunday evenings (Central Alberta VHF ARES Net).

John VA6SJA suggested a poster board to erect at events. Such as the Red Deer Picnic Hot Dog Lunch, etc.

President Troy suggested that One example would be a booth at the Airshow which is coming up.

Doug also wondered if SARA could copy the Foothills Amateur Radio Society which gives away a free small 25-watt mobile radio to anyone who signs up or passes a course. He does not know the source of these radios. Or could SARA copy CARA which gives one free year of membership to those that pass their course? There is some retention from each year's graduates.

Garry VE6CIA stated that 25 people who passed the course sponsored by CAARC in 2019 were granted one-year complimentary memberships in CAARC but none of these were renewed. Of these there were only 2 or 3 from the Red Deer vicinity.

Doug also suggests a map of the province showing where SARA's links are and in a form that we can hand out to people. Perhaps show it on a business card. It should show something that SARA plans in the future.

Treasurer Perry added that the back of the card could show all SARA repeaters and how to link them.

Should SARA have a phone number to publish on the saralink site? CARA has a phone number on their web site; Doug answers 3 or 4 calls a week mostly about amateur radio. He suggests a VOIP line would cost about \$2 a month. It could be forwarded to someone's phone to be answered.

Brian VE6BCA indicated that some questions are coming through the saralink web site. 2 or 3 during the last year. Some are answered and some are left hanging. "How do we get into

amateur radio”, At this point SARA doesn’t have a trainer in Amateur Radio in SARA in the Edmonton area.

President Troy said that SARA probably has access to some trainers in Central Alberta.

Doug asserted that have to get more persistent in answering these calls.

We discussed whether more members would be more important than healthy finances.

President Troy gave his opinion that amateur radio activities should be about people before money.

Retaining members

Should SARA hold a Christmas Party, possibly in 2 or more locations and linked via video link for a possible President’s message? Doug reported that Calgary clubs are having Christmas parties where there is a small subsidy per attendee. About 50 attended the Filipino group’s party, and Doug has received reports that the CARA Christmas party filled a room with capacity to hold 100.

Championship of events for attracting and retaining members

Doug VE6CID suggests that a champion be appointed for each event or activity. We can discuss this at the next executive meeting.

President Troy requested that we executive members should come back with some ideas of what can be done to the next executive meeting.

Doug VE6CID suggested a meeting dedicated to discussing and fleshing out these ideas before the next scheduled executive meeting. Champions should be members. We should invite anybody in the amateur radio community to discuss these topics, but participants should be members. If SARA takes an item on we can invite the interested amateur to join.

Brian VE6BCA requested that these possible actions and plans be added to the agenda of the upcoming Annual General Meeting for the members to discuss. We should ask them to discuss and choose from 5 or 6 options.

Scheduling of Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting will be at the 2020 Red Deer Picnic. We are required to give at least one month’s notice to each member. SARA’s bylaws allow that each member may be notified via electronic communication.

Garry VE6CIA suggested that we could start now and repeat the notice every month.

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Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Perry reported that no mail items had been added to the SARA Dropbox account for the last year and a half until the day of this meeting. A current Treasurer's Report was not available for this meeting.

Garry VE6CIA deposited the proceeds of the Flea Market. There was a \$500 cheque written to Doug VE6CID who had paid for the hall.

Garry VE6CIA had sent out an email with the financial report for the Flea Market on October 23. He reported on the numbers as they were reported in his email of which the contents are copied here:

"=====

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Garry <ve6cia@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Oct 23, 2019 at 4:49 PM
Subject: [Executive] Oct. 2019 Flea Market report
To: Executive Sara <executive@saralink.ca>

Sara Flea Market Oct.19, 2019

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Door | \$891 |
| Tables | \$340 |
| Memberships 5 (3 from June) | \$125 |
| Donations (coffee/donuts) | \$60.80 |
| | |
| Total | \$1435.80 |
| | |
| Donuts bought | -\$44 |
| | |
| Grand Total | \$1416.80 |

Not sure why the odd amount at the door, but the other 3 numbers I am positive on. The total deposit amount, matches the dollar amount taken in at the door, which 3 of us confirmed the count of, at the front table.

Sorry about the cash withdrawal for donuts Perry, but that was not done by me. Hard to enter in the books. I suggest just entering donation amount of \$16.80 when doing the books to make it balance...Garry VE6CIA

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Secretary's note: It looks like the \$1416.80 is what was counted out at the end.

The net proceeds from the flea market would have been 916.80 after the \$500 cheque to Doug was accounted for.

Repeaters

Doug VE6CID reported (before the call to order) that repeater VE6OIL had been off the air because a connector had separated in the cold weather. There was then high SWR after the

weather warmed up which caused a high current draw repeater to blow the fuse. It is now fixed and working.

SARA may be able to share the tower and building facilities of the property that NARC just bought just south of Wabamum Lake. Perry VE6PTA reported that NARC had bought a piece of property from Environment Canada which includes a tower, west of Highvale, just south of Wabamum Lake at the east end. There is a 160-foot guyed tower with a 210C antenna with a 10x10 ft. shack at the base. They connected a mobile radio to the antenna, talked to someone in Rocky Mountain House, and got an acknowledgement from a Calgary repeater. In order to add this to the NARC repeater network, there will be some reassignment of frequencies, probably at VE6UV. It is on a 300x300 ft lot with a 10x10 shack. Right now there are no other occupants. Environment Canada is willing to come back. The property was bought for the quiet HF environment. NARC is investigating setting it up for remote HF operation. Having the tower on the property is a plus. Brian mentioned that several commercial entities had co-located at the VE6RJK repeater which helped considerably with expenses. Environment Canada may come back.

Brian VE6BCA stated that SARA is using the NARC VE6PLP repeater location. It has 2 full time linked radios with 2 yagis on that tower, one to Edmonton VE6NHB and one to the Limestone Mountain SARA hub.

Perry VE6PTA reported that NARC is having some trouble linking VE6HM to VE6PLP in one direction.

Brian VE6BCA stated Past President Ray always had some surplus equipment and had put together a bunch of packages to expand all over the place.

He added that some of SARA's equipment, such as VE6NHB in Edmonton which is 20 years old, may need replacement soon. When Ray left, he left supplies. SARA probably don't have much stock to replace or repair our installations with. It is getting harder to find surplus equipment.

Doug VE6CID reported that he can get new or used repeaters at a good price from Prairie Mobile for amateurs.

Garry VE6CIA estimated that we would be able to totally refurbish one of SARA's sites with brand new equipment for under \$2000.

New Business

Northern Representative

Brian VE6BCA stated that Jim Camp VA6JC has agreed to be SARA's northern representative and to undertaking the repair of our installations in northern Alberta.

Spares Inventory

Brian indicated that Jim VA6JC should get familiar with our stock of equipment.

Perry has keys for the NARC storage trailer. He will have a meeting with Jim Camp about recording the inventory. He hopes to see Jim at the February 8 Flea Market.

Access to Sites:

Garry stated that the vast majority of non-functioning repeaters are in Telus Communications Incorporated sites.

Doug VE6CID stated that we need a way for the SARA Executive and its directed personnel to have access to any of its equipment at all sites which should not depend on a volunteer who is also a Telus employee. SARA need to have written "lease" agreements.

He continued by stating access may mean that we need to establish separate buildings or equipment cabinets with a power plug.

Doug also stated that the Foothills Amateur Radio Society has agreements for with Telus. Ray Bourne VE6LG has the necessary documents. We could ask to use those documents as templates.

Garry VE6CIA reported that Access to Telus Communications Incorporated sites is very restricted. It is ridiculously difficult as we need to have an official escort to each location. We need local Telus person to let us in.

We need to find a Telus representative in Edmonton to work with us.

We can ask Jim VA6JC, a retired Telus manager, for advice about getting access,

Garry VE6CIA stated that Telus Mobility uses lockboxes which makes access easier.

Corrections required for saralink web site:

President Troy reported that his name is spelled wrong on the SARA web site. Garry VE6CIA will ask Past President Ray to correct that as he (Garry) does not have access.

Next meeting:

Next meeting scheduled for March 6 at 1900 MST. (MDT starts March 8).

Adjournment:

This meeting adjourned at 20:10.

John Allen, VA6SJA Secretary