

# Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

## MINUTES

**October 11, 2023**

Attendance: 15. Meeting held in person at the Queen of Peace Catholic Community and also via ZOOM.

Gordon Gibby  
Leland Gallup  
Craig White  
Susan Halbert  
Eric Pleace  
Wendell Wright  
Manish Sahni  
Vann Chesney  
Dean Covey  
Earl McDow  
David Huckstep  
Reid Tillery  
Jeff Capehart  
Judith Jones (via Zoom)  
Lorilyn Roberts

**Introductions.** From 1830 until 1900 when the meeting commenced. The NFARC/NF4AC radio club met for this month in person at the Queen of Peace Catholic Community and via ZOOM.

- 1. INTRODUCTION/NON-APPROVAL OF AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2023 MINUTES.** KX4Z started the meeting by inviting all to introduce themselves. Meeting participants shared their ham and amateur histories for quite some time. This was done because we hadn't "introduced" ourselves to one another for a considerable period. August minutes with the Secretary for editing and submitted for approval in the October meeting. September minutes submitted for approval. Both August and September minutes approved.
- 2. PRESENTATION OF SEPTEMBER SECTION HOURS.** Jeff Capehart reported hours for September. Total 159 hours reported. Of these, bigger events included Lab N'Lunch Cables, ARES meeting, and deployment to EOC for 18 hours. So far in October, 19 hours reported. KX4Z showed the link on the "new" NFARC website for volunteer hour recording. Also showed the "engine" for volunteer reporting, and explained how expansively inclusive reporting can be. If you do anything for the ARES group record the hours!
- 3. LAB N'LUNCH FOR SEPTEMBER 2023.** 14 total data cables were made by the group. Jeff Capehart showed switches using Cat 5 cables. These can be used with adapters for managing mics and data cables for radio and computer connections. KX4Z showed a pinout diagram for how these cables are made. Motion made to put the built cables in the go-boxes at the EOC. Questions as to how the cable could be used. COL Huckstep explained in a real world example

how he could have used the data cable switch to switch a/b back and forth from audio phone to digital. Motion carried to install in the go-boxes.

4. **NEED FOR EOC LEVEL III PERSONNEL.** KX4Z explained the background of ARRL's insistence that EC's finish ARES task books; this led also to the NFL Section issuance of the ARRL NFL task book and the EOC (by itself) task book. There are 4 people who are qualified Level III for ARES NFL and EOC task books. One is moving and one is inactive with this group for all intents and purposes. Susan Halbert objected to the requirement, for example, the professional responsibility courses on the FEMA/DHS website. She suggested that, instead, the EOC Level III substitute practical training for the training requirements as now listed on the task book. This led to a discussion between KX4Z and KG4VWI on how and why the course listing is a good idea. KX4Z asked KG4VWI to consider taking a few of the classes before pressing ahead with a request to change the standards requirement. Good discussion of what kind of training should be required for being Level III at the EOC. KX4Z suggested that we table the discussion to next month, after people have done one course.
  
5. **FIRE STATION ANTENNA PROJECT PROPOSAL.** K9RFT has done work in the east of the county. This involved coordination with Fire Departments, upcoming radio courses, new antennas and an upgrade to "Comms 3.15." (our group communications plan). Reid Tillery described how he would put an amateur radio station at the Melrose fire department, one that can contact the EOC directly or indirectly. Tillery said he would teach a Tech Level class for the Melrose Fire Dept personnel at Cross Creek. Ham radio in Windsor, Melrose, and Cross Creek for interoperability. These are "contract" fire stations. Their personnel come from long distances to work. Contract stations also have local vetted volunteers...having these as part of a licensed group will increase pool of operators. Reid also discussed the complexities of a simplex VHF antenna network. Described the advantages of VHF rollup antennas up at 55 feet. "Height is might," as he says. He encouraged all of us to at least have the possibility of putting up a line into a tree that would offer contingent effective VHF simplex comms. KX4Z showed a map with lines from the Gainesville center to all of the County shelters. This illustrated the extent of the physical requirements for shelter VHF comm connections. K9RFT talked about para 3.15 of the local comms plan. He wrote up a suggested amendment to the plan that described in greater detail what local helper stations (LHS) would do. They would act as nodes into the EOC and to the area outside the disaster zone. Home based support, health and welfare messages are the types of assistance and messages that could be part of this plan. As to the latter (health and welfare), Reid went over what they would be for. How home based amateurs could assist neighbors in their local "catchment" area and assist with neighborhood watches. These missions could be performed not only with amateur radio, but also GMRS, FRS, and CB radio. He described a neighborhood net using the "wilderness protocol." The latter is in effect a neighborhood radio net. The LHS amateur could take messages collected in the local catchment area for transmission out of area by, for example, HF. Talked about the skillset of an LHS: minimum would be a 50w VHF with a high antenna (roll up slim jim into a tree). Off grid capability for extended ops as necessary for long term operations. Data for connections that leverage data connections for formatted messages. Finally, HF for long distance comms, both by voice and by data into wherever the Internet may actually still be in operation. Key to all of this is getting to know your neighbors. Each of us is a "point of light" for neighbors. Motion carried to include Reid's proposal into the comms plan.
  
6. **GARC UF COLLEGE CLUB REPORT.** Matthew Self asked to attend, but he declined to show up for this meeting.

7. **DECEMBER LUNCHEON?** Susan Tipton offered to have a luncheon on December the 9<sup>th</sup>. This would be lunch, probably at Los Pollos. December 9<sup>th</sup> at Los Pollos. Motion carried for informal luncheon at Los Pollos on that date.
8. **POTA TECH NIGHT AND OCTOBER LAB N'LUNCH POTA HANDS ON.** Wendell said that 14 attended the POTA class he conducted. This Saturday, the 14<sup>th</sup>...lunch at Wendy's, and then 1300 at Gordon Gibby's house. Bring laptop, pen and pencil. We'll start out POTA hunting (contacting stations in POTA parks), and making sure all have POTA accounts set up. Wendell will show how to use HAMRS for logging. He also will show paper formats for POTA logs. He'll work through various tools on the POTA website. Showed the website on a screen. 9 will come to the Lab N'Lunch. After Wendell sets up everyone, the intent is to activate a park if circumstances permit. We will focus on SSB for this outing.
9. **LICENSE CLASS COURSE.** KX4Z proposed a number of dates for doing an Extra Class. K9RFT recommended "Ham Radio School" as having good curriculum for the various amateur radio class levels. Considerable discussion ensued as to whether it would be better to conduct Tech and/or General level licensing courses as our next teaching mission. Earl and Reid Tillery have agreed to propose a date and curriculum for conducting a license class.
10. **WINTER FIELD DAY.** KX4Z talked about what the GARC and GARS groups are doing for Winter Field Day. Summer Field Day ratings will come out in the December QST. He believes it is possible that we will have achieved top three in the nation in our 4F class! As KX4Z says, our people are our assets. Winter Field Day does not permit FT8/4. So for digital operations we must use, for example, RTTY and JS8: CW, too. RTTY is probably going to be the way it goes for most of us for Winter Field Day. Gordon suggest that we operate three stations at the EOC, which is already scheduled. Quintplexor allows us to use the antenna...but an EFHW is one possibility, since it is close to resonance on the WFD bands. Secret to winning is not like Field Day. Here the secret is "multipliers." When the high bands are open, change technique to get all the multipliers. Think of plans for how the "slots" for operation will be filled. Signup and scheduling will be open on 1 December. First come first serve. KX4Z talked about how contacts on various modes and various bands lend into the multiplier strategy. Strategy emphasizes agility and flexibility. We will use N3FJP. That software can give a very good overview of what is happening.
11. **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.** POTA level 3 on Nov 11 (?). Nov 4 is the LNL RTTY/RTTY/JS8 Practice. November TechNite Nov2. Timing issues discussed for these events, so we may have to adjust these dates. Wendell suggests folks who want to can put out a request to have someone take them out to a POTA activation.
12. **DATA CABLE SWITCH SELECTION.** These have not actually been tested; no definitive choice made as to whether the group should adopt the button or the switch versions.
13. **BADGING ISSUES.** COL Huckstep is working with David Peaton about getting correct information on dates of birth, etc. Also described the efforts for a new crank up tower that will allow us to have a tower that won't have to be climbed. This will allow for changing towers. COL Huckstep is leading efforts to work new tower at the new EOC site. This work (one hour spent on the issue just today alone) much appreciated by the meeting participants.

**14. ADJOURN** at 9:00 pm, 11 October 2023.