

Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES

April 9, 2025

Attendance: **14.** The meeting was at Queen of Peace Catholic Community, and via ZOOM. Meeting attendees are not specifically noted as attending live and in person or via ZOOM.

Gordon Gibby
Leland Gallup
Susan Halbert
Dean Covey
Manish Sahni
Earl Sloan
David Huckstep
Brian Joy
Brett Wallace
Ron Lewis
Jeff Capehart
Earl McDow
Mark McDow
Rosemary Jones

Introductions. From 1830 until 1900 when the meeting commenced.

- 1. MINUTES APPROVED FOR MARCH 2025/PREVIOUS MONTH ARES HOURS REPORT/ESF2 COORDINATION MEETING.** Jeff Capehart discussed the resources available to our group; three levels of taskbook and different levels/roles for support for emergencies. ARES hours: almost double with 154 hours reported public service, including exercise planning and meetings, and training events such as the technite talks. AA3YB talked the 27 Feb 25 ESF2 coordination meeting at the EOC with the EM director and deputy. Topics on the meeting agenda included expectations for activations, forms that will be used (the Specific Incident Report), and information concerning the new EOC. As to the new EOC, there was discussion with the EMT as to our communications needs (e.g., tower, location of the radio room, etc.). Following the Feb 27 meeting, we saw the new EOC location (site visit). KX4Z showed Google Earth image overhead of the new AFRCR building. Dave Huckstep says that Chief Taylor is the project manager, who Dave Huckstep knows, but says this isn't terribly useful. Bottom line is that we will make this work, and the changed location will probably be better overall for our purposes. The move to the new EOC, in any event, won't be until after this year's hurricane season.
- 2. PROGRAM TOPIC #1; LAST MINUTE SET PLANNING.** KX4Z explained the staffing at EOC, the GARS site, in addition Ron Lewis will be at a fire station acting as a POD. The State EC IAP plans shows that comms will be done entirely without telephone or internet. This means most RMS gateways will be worthless because they are "on the internet." EOC will have to check their email frequently from KX4Z to see what's happening. This is because KX4Z's

station will recognize NF4AC as “local,” and consequently not as needing “the Internet.” This means that the station can be used by and between KX4Z and NF4AC for Winlink exchanges. Went over the IAP/comms plan. Structured info can be sent to EOC by simplex P2P for situation reports (144.990). Questions: Earl mentioned that the FL 205 lists 7.197 LSB as the statewide emergency net freq (0900). Went through the injects, and distributed the envelopes.

3. **LICENSE CLASS UPDATES/LICENSE CLASS BY ZOOM FOR LOFTON.** Reid Tillery doing a great job raising up new hams. Gordon is going to do a license course by zoom for the 3 or 4 Lofton students who are interested. It will probably be by evening zoom on Monday through Friday (not Thursday); same schedule as proposed fall class by Reid. Students purchase the online series and instructors (besides Gordon) are actively recruited by Gordon!! The materials used by Reid are excellent! Instructors sign a non-compete agreement, and instructors get a full set. Probably three or four weeks at four sessions per week. Kids finish June 3d, Gordon plans to start after that, to finish before Field Day. Testing can be online.
4. **SHOW AND TELL #1.** Ron Lewis passed around a print out showing a “QRP” vertical antenna sourced from China and available from Amazon. A QRP vertical comprised of a very small transformer on a spike, to which a 17’ whip is attached and extended. Uses ribbon cable for the radial set. Ron reports that it is stupid easy to put up, and is very quiet. Antenna is shortened to get a good SWR. Ron used his G90 with great success.
5. **SHOW AND TELL #2.** KX4Z showed computer screen of software for tracking satellites, and for control of motorized tracking mount. Enter Keplerian elements and some other data, and it allows for control of a rotator that Gordon built with a beam antenna that Gordon also built. The rotator was operational and was actually working as if it were tracking a sat in azimuth. Gordon showed another home-brewed control rotator that will allow VHF and UHF circularly polarized antennas for sat operations (this is for altitude): it sits on top of the azimuth rotator. He talked about his method for securing circular polarization using a folded dipole for the driven element. The mode is SSB VHF and UHF.
7. **SHOW AND TELL #3.** The new band pass filters that Gordon has constructed. He handed around the new 10m and 15m versions. Uncased so the meeting participants could actually see them. These are used in conjunction with the quintplexor to knock down interference between simultaneous 10 and 15m operations. The quintplexor and BP filters work in series. The BP filters can be used in series to achieve isolation in excess of 60 dB. The BP filters have lower loss than relays, so using several BP filters in series (even with the quintplexor) isn’t an issue.
8. **APRIL LAB N’LUNCH: VHF ANTENNAS.** Gordon can run an April session if the group works. One possibility is a 6m dipole; another is a 10 foot collinear 2m (this is like an extended slim jim). Another possibility is a 2m or 70cm Yagi. This would be for the 26th. Several folks interested, and the group decided to do – the decision was to do a 6m PVC dipole.
9. **PROGRAM TOPIC #2:** New repeater. Dave Huckstep talked through a project for putting another 2m repeater on top of the County Admin Building. Will use a Diamond collinear 2m vertical. Jim Carr will provide the repeater. We will install the antenna while Jim Carr is putting in the duplexer and the new repeater. We don’t know new repeater frequency [Sec’y note: this was provided by Jim Carr the day after the ARES meeting]. Not as good as the 820 repeater because not as high, but ground elevation is such that it will be a pretty good repeater with good reach. There is also a generator at the County Admin Building, so presumably this repeater will

be resistant to “normal” power outages. There is also a battery UPS for it until the onsite generator kicks in. So theoretically a resilient and fairly high up repeater.

10. SUMMER FIELD DAY UPDATES. We don’t know if the Lofton kids can be integrated into our Summer FD. Bob Lightner says his kids will be able to put together the trailer/antenna. Not known who/whether the trailer will be dropped off/picked up. Chaperoning is a real concern. Having a parent or teacher – someone who has a relationship with these kids – participate is a good idea. Earl Sloan says that notarized medical waiver is essential to have an ability to get medical care if needed. This would be our responsibility to make sure that it is done correctly. Earl will bring in example of the forms that are used. Both chaperone and group responsibility to make sure the paperwork/chaperoning is done correctly. Parents/transport/escort into the EOC or the EMCOMM trailer are issues. The kids could be a GOTA station if they’re using their trailer. They are savvy contesters. We don’t know whether the parents are willing to undertake the chaperone, transportation, getting waivers signed, etc. Ron Lewis says that everyone in the group would have to be background checked/screened – this is addition to the 2 adult rules. Is our badging consistent with the requirements? Ron points out that all groups have differing rule. Also would have to be approved by the ACSO. Getting even adults into the EOC is OK as long as we EOC badged people bring them into the EOC. A lot of points to consider....parental interest and can we meet all the logistical and administrative challenges. Gordon would really like it if there was another trailer besides his for use at SFD. Gordon proposes we use “our” beam to put it in the back of the parking lot; the Lofton ECOMM trailer has its own beam. We might have two beams under those circumstances. Earl discussed where to site cooking facilities. Behind the dumpster – or on the grassy field. Depends on wind.

11. PROGRAM TOPIC #3: Re-discussion of the issues with respect to ARES at the new EOC and the issue of the tower and wire antennas. After the site visit, we considered the issue of the City’s approval for siting the tower. Possibility for using LMR600 over the building. The tower will be 50’ extended and 25’ nested. KX4Z revisited the development of our EOC antenna systems over the years.

12. ADJOURNMENT. At 2033 hours EDT.