

# Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

## MINUTES

**August 13 2025**

Attendance: **18**. The meeting was at the Alachua County Emergency Operations Center and via ZOOM. Meeting attendees are not specifically noted as attending live and in person or via ZOOM.

Gordon Gibby  
Leland Gallup  
Jeff Capehart  
Susan Halbert  
Rosemary Jones  
Brett Wallace  
Dean Covey  
Cooper Campen  
John Campen  
David Huckstep  
Mark McDow  
Earl McDow  
Brian Joy  
Reid Tillery  
Charlie Scordo  
Mike Hasselbeck  
Mark Miller  
Earl Sloane

**Introductions and AUXCOMM Team Report.** From 1830 until 1845 when the meeting commenced with a brief walkthrough of a last minute event that was not captured in the draft agenda. This was a kickoff meeting at the Marion County EOC of a proposed North Central Florida AUXCOMM WORKING GROUP. AA3YB, W4JIR, and NH2KW went briefly through the results of today's AUXCOMM kickoff meeting at the Ocala Marion County EC. PowerPoint slides prepared by Marion County Emergency Radio Team (MERT) will be provided by the Alachua team for posting to the NFARC radio club's website. The overall result of this meeting is a movement ahead on setting up an AUXCOMM-centric network of 11 North Florida counties. Goal: robust, resilient county interoperable network of AUXCOMM amateur radio volunteers who can provide scalable emergent comms for their county EM when normal communication and internet channels are down.

### **1. MINUTES APPROVED FOR JULY 2025/PREVIOUS MONTH ARES HOURS**

**REPORT.** Jeff Capehart used the slide deck prepared by KX4Z to lay out for ARES attendees just exactly what we do – these include Lab N' Lunches, etc. Next subject was taskbooks; these included a look at the new ARRL taskbooks and how the taskbook relates to newly developed ARRL training, such as the new ARRL EMCOMM course. The task book published by ARRL points to and rests on training through the new courses. Our attendees were instructed on what taskbooks are, and how the ARRL taskbook differs somewhat slightly from the Alachua County taskbook. It is fair to say that the taskbooks are complementary. Discussed what AUXCOMM

is. Jeff talked about SERTRAC and the various levels that we require in our taskbook for certifying competence at increasing authority and responsibility. Showed the difference between Levels One, Two, and Three. Three being the highest level, able to independently run the EOC radio room and provide full support to the EM team. Reid Tillery described the real world utility of learning the IS system, and how government resources actually work on a scaled basis. Jeff Capehart continued to flesh out the requirements of the taskbooks, and how these relate to working in shelters and the County EOC. Next up, Jeff Capehart showed a slide of the 12 “available badged volunteers.” We could be really really short this hurricane season, KX4Z points out, and many of us are aging out. Also we have limitations as volunteers posed by family and other concerns. Minutes for July 2025 approved. Previous hours report. Total was 64 hours; half of that comes from this meeting. Discussion of how reimbursement for volunteer hours works, and how we support the County to get reimbursement

2. **PROGRAM TOPIC #1.** Fall Technician Class. We have full slate of teachers lined up. Gordon will publicize; something has already gone out from Earl Sloane. Gordon advised Rosemary to download the info flier on the website. Gordon showed the sign up page from our website. The Tech course will be conducted live at the EOC.
3. **PROGRAM TOPIC #2.** Leadership Opportunities/Future Lab N’Lunches. Need more leaders to develop and further the group’s activities. There are many things that folks could volunteer to lead on. KX4Z listed many topics: YAGIs; transverters; setting up RMS for Winlink; doing VARA FM Winlink; how to submit ARRL Field Day submission; two meter colinear antenna construction; building parabolic antennas; LORA network; DSP for audio; 630m ham radio transceiver; how to order and assemble a Gator box; how to set up Starlink. With respect to Starlink, KX4Z says that it takes 30 seconds to set up Starlink; POTA station; how to set up masts; how to program CHIRP; Winlink review session; how to use NANO VNAs, using them to set up duplexers, how to do Powerpoles; how to make 49:1 baluns; how to make EFHW antennas; how to use Raspberry Pi to add ID to a repeater; how to build solar power system. For all of these suggested topics, KX4Z said we need volunteers to lead, and the rest of this topic discussion was devoted to topic and form of teaching/event selection, volunteers, and dates/times. Reid volunteered to do a Starlink connection teaching session. Connor Campien noted that Starlink was very useful for his father in Hurricane Helene in North Carolina. Date for the Starlink set up demo is to be determined. Gallup AA3YB will do a POTA lab N’ lunch Saturday, October 4, at the San Felasco Park (details to follow). Brett Wallace suggested a Lab N’ Lunch for digital comms such as FT8 etc., and one for ICS. Susan Halbert said that she could bring a different perspective on how and why ICS is so important. Why do we do ICS. Brett will do an ICS, but instead of doing it as a Lab N’Lunch, he will do as a program item for the next ARES meeting (Sec’y note: TO BE HELD AT QUEEN OF PEACE). This will take a half hour of the program, and is now scheduled for September 10<sup>th</sup>. Brett and Susan will take lead on the this. Brett Wallace offered to undertake the same training/familiarization for Digital comms as a program item for the October ARES meeting. We could not get more specific offers of teaching in the ARES meetings. Rosemary volunteers to be a student. Earl McDow offers to be a Lab n’lunch facilitator/instructor for the general subject of coax and connectors. This will include connecting PL-259s to coax. November 8 is the tentative date. KX4Z says that 27 September is a date he will do a Lab N’ Lunch for VHF antenna gain measurements. Reid will teach (Sec’y Note: what subject? I didn’t capture this). Will do this as a Saturday Lab N Lunch in December 13<sup>th</sup> here in the EOC.

4. **PROGRAM TOPIC #3.** Field Day AARP/IP. had 1661 total contacts. Dave Huckstep and Mike Huckstep were tied in contacts. GOTA did well, 203. CW was 417. Digital 906. 1000 points ahead of the #1 4F station from last year. We have a good chance to be near or on top of 4F. Improvements accomplished in 2025 were a very long list, including: familiarity with tower trailer; antenna multiplexer; inter personal relations; Manish Sahni did all the FD messages by himself (!). Improvements to be made for next FD include: repair burned capacitors; placards to help out with digital software; Whiteboard for team commo; CHARTS to help visitors understand GOTA; GOTA train coaches; get more sign ups; describing GOTA purpose to visitors and use voice in addition to digital modes (as visitors associate voice with radio). The overall list of improvements needed was displayed by KX4Z and are too numerous to record here. See the website for the actual list of points and improvements. Rosemary suggests an “all hands” meeting just before the event of every volunteer who has signed up to be there. David Huckstep then led a lively discussion on the subject of the scope of our FD effort. David’s overall take is that FD has become too exhaustive and comprehensive; that, instead, we should consider a “walk in and turn on equipment” that leverages and uses the standard equipment and antenna set at the EOC instead of building a much larger footprint of gear, cables, antennas, and stations. In the real world of an activation, we would be handling real communications exactly this way, more likely than not. W4JIR opined that we spend a lot of time and effort trying to get ready to start from scratch. FD done the way he proposes would reduce the time and energy that we’ve spent in FD, including this past year. He said he was so tired setting up that he was exhausted even before FD. He suggests that at 1400 we turn on the systems we already have to do a more limited FD. Reducing the intensity of preparation would be great – exhaustion may be an issue. So...if we only have one station, then 1F may be it. Then people might only have 30 minutes to operate. In other words, make it more like GARS. We have 3 HF stations in the EOC room right now; would have to use a multiplexor to make all this work (this is Gordon Gibby’s point). Gordon Gibby worked through a number of points countering David Huckstep’s proposal. KX4Z suggests that a 1F Field Day wouldn’t be good. David Huckstep then modified his suggestion: in new EOC maybe we could have more than one HF station operating at the same time – this would reduce the prep effort and time to do FD. This led to a spirited discussion of operations at the new EOC so we can represent our needs to the leadership. Huckstep suggests we take a look at this issue after we get into the new EOC. Group agreed to the AAR/IP as suggested by KX4Z.
5. **PROGRAM TOPIC #4.** Local digital assets review. What is working and what isn’t. Jeff Capehart showed a graphic/map of what is/isn’t working. Will work with K4ZSW to get visibility on his packet RMS. We don’t know DFU’s status, but AA3YB said that he “sees” DFU when attempting packet operations – wasn’t able to connect with K4ZSW, although the latter said that he knew someone was trying to connect with him – and that was in fact AA3YB. Earl Sloane said that he’d talked with Jay Garlitz as to the status of the DFU station – seems to be that DFU 7 and 12 are down – even though they (or at least one of the ports) still responds on a Soundmodem network node poll. Need asset inventory. Don’t know status of the UHF repeater that we put up on the County Admin Building. Gordon showed a map with a circle marking the probable range of the UHF repeater. The CHIRP list on the webpage has been updated – 985 has been replaced with the new UHF/County Admin building. Gordon took down his packet station several years ago. Took down his SHARES. Folks: test the system and see what’s working. Kudos to NH2KW, who after the meeting conducted one on one training for Conner Campien on Baofeng operation and using CHIRP to program the radio. Thanks to Brett!!

- 6. PROGRAM TOPIC #5.** Report from ICS-300. Reid talked about G-300 that he took several weeks ago in person here at the EOC. If you're going to take G-300 you have to have prerequisites. G-300 hadn't been offered at Gainesville; but now the plan is to offer it once a year. G-300 is excellent! G-300 is apparently time-limited in terms of its certification life. Courses that were taken before 2019 don't count for G400 – so courses are time limited. Brett Wallace showed the book that he had created as part of the deployment to Hurricane Helene.

- 7. ADJOURNMENT.** At 2036 EDT.