North Florida Amateur Radio Club / ARES®
NOVEMBER Minutes 11/12/2025

Taken by Gordon KX4Z in the absence of the Secretary.

Participants
1. Earl the Elder
2. Brett Wallace
3. Dave Huckstep
4. Manish Sahni
5. Angela Bashan
6. Susan Halbert
7. Jeff Capehart
8. Gordon Gibby
9. By zoom: Mike WB2FKO
10. By zoom: Larry Whited
11. By Zoom: Hugh KN4IIM
12. By zoom: Brian Joy
13. Dave Pokorney
14. Dean Covey
15. Rosemary
16. Ron Lewis

Visitors: David Basham

1. Introduction – Jeff Capehart handled introductions and review of the activities of the ARES group
Per the slide set

2. Minutes were approved.

3. Previous Month Hours Report: 85 total hours, a little lighter than usual.   Jeff managed to coax some folks to report who had been tardy to report.   The POTA lab was worth 30 hours of that total!

4. Motion to revisit the requirements for AEC back to Level I, which has been the normal requirement for AEC; Motion passed with large majority

5. County MOU signup: Dean Covey also signed up
Susan Halbert hasn't sent hers in but promises to – she hadn't found it.

6. **Special Talk on Digital Communications-- Brett Wallace**
Used ham radio operators on Guam to connect to other hospitals and the Guam office of Civil Defense; had better connections than some government efforts.
But in mass casualty, they wouldn't be able to get onto the base; so Brett got his own license also.
Able to reach the EOC on the island.
Feels this is a "duty"   Comms is the essence of community

Digital modes: "TYPED" or image information.
Data has advantages of accuracy, retention of information, ability to send great details. Voice is better for tactical communications.

Lists for supplies, or names in shelters – very difficult to do with voice.
Seeing in the AUXCOM that many are still stuck on voice techniques
He's hoping to change their dependency on voice; possibly making digital as the

- Primary
- Alternate
- Contingency
- Emergency

Contingency might be repeaters; but they can fail.
Emergency – without infrastructure – might be HF

Winlink "tried and true" Radio email system, with or without Internet; very useful store and forward via the Internet Use RMS in unaffected area. Would likely survive some cyber attacks as well. Able to get messages to other state.

Able to do ICS forms as well.

Automatic Link Establishment – used this in the military; view this as for a lower level driver who just need to make a connection. "Dummy proof" Not for sending digital messages like an ICS213;

CISA – own "SHARES"
VARAC – HF/ FM / SAT Digital Chat Reinvented

JS8 – his favorite – simplicity; very user friendly; uses the FT8 modulation protocol
Works way below the voice noise floor
Has multiple different speeds for typing;
In NC he was working with AMRRON and JS8 is one of their favorites and they have PDF forms that would allow people to mark their status. (Not exactly the ICS forms) – but all they had to do was to send one line of text that would fill out the PDF
Also uses it to get a SNR report of half dozen other people who would be able to hear him
Acts like a gas gauge telling him how many people are able to hear him.
Does have the store and forward messaging capability;
Winlink is more 1:1
"Pops up" in their box when the other person gets on their computer
ARES locally has tried this but didn't grow legs back then.

FLDGI – "Swiss army knife" of radio communications
Not quite as user friendly as Winlink; takes a little more to get it to operate properly;
Working through a routine over and over you get better and better at it
Reid and he spent six months trying different methods to be able to use all the features of FLDGI

Power is in

FLMSG
FLAMP

On his computer screen he runs JS8 in the right hand side of his home computer, seeing the SNR reports
On the left top he shows FLDGI (using flrig to connect all of them)
He runs flmsg and flamp in the bottom left of his screen.

ICS213 as a drop down ; also red cross forms available;
Able to fill out a form; fills in the "blocks" and doesn't have to send the entire PDF – just the needed parts.

Power of F/MSG:
To get error free communications use FLAMP
The other person can request particular blocks so then you can get messages across to both people error free.

Discussion of Linux – has advantages for security.

AMRRON exercise – shows 5-7 stations connecting via radio

Cuban government was blocking ham radio frequencies; but digital modes were able to get through past the jamming.   (2021)

Photo of the SET – running voice net on VHF net and Susan sending messages over Winlink.

Contestia 4250 is what AMRRON uses.

Discussion of tradeoffs between bandwidth, speed and threshold.

Possibly 4 volunteers

7. Inter-County AUXCOMM
   • Marion & Flagler driving this
   • Wants to bridge the gap between the neighbors/neighbors and the government
   • As the feds back out, it will be more of state and counties working together.
   • Government just pays $$$$$ to Motorola and doesn't always realize that these systems can fail.
   • Auxcomm was designed to reduce friction of what "club" you are in.
   • More "standardized set" ;   Shield us from "new task book"
   • Competency is what matters;   need to actually be able to DO things not just get things checked off.
   • Brett gets on his soapbox about digital communications; the others are more thinking at the "repeater" level.

- Others interested in going with Brett – Susan might go;   Rosemary might go;   Jeff might go
- Timing for the exercises still haven't been worked out yet

8. Winter field day?

- plan on not using the soc?
- Susan – in the past we had conferences where we taught techniques;   Instead of winter field day we could have a conference and teach techniques and
- Do a workshop
- huddle up the 4 RV's possibly at San Felasco