

Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES

December 10, 2025

Attendance **15**: The meeting was at the 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
Brett Wallace
David Huckstep
Susan Halbert
Dean Covey
Manish Sahni
Jeff Capehart
Craig White
Rosemary (Judith) Jones
Earl McDow
Mark McDow
Earl Sloane
Reid Tillery
Hugh Minnich

Introductions.

- 1. MINUTES APPROVED FOR NOVEMBER 2025/PREVIOUS MONTH ARES HOURS REPORT.** Training books: ARRL has one, and the local ARES training handbook is similar...but not identical. There is also training specific to Alachua County ARES. That information is available at the NFARC website, in the “Educational Articles” section. Discussion of our ARES’ groups periodic activities; these include the usual Thursday night ARES net on 146.82 repeater, Lab N’Lunches (two in December!), Tech Nites (before the ARES net), and Summer/Winter Field Days. Discussion of ARES levels of service in support of our Alachua County EOC. ARRL requires Level 3 for EC’s. Nov minutes approved. Previous hours for our group for Nov: 175 hours – big part of that was for the Veteran’s Day ceremonies; this is considered a public service event. 16 people at the last month’s meeting. Two lab n’lunches in November, so Jeff guestimated total hours for that. AA3YB, the current Alachua ARES/NFARC Secretary, is resigning at the end of December 2025, and withdrawing from ARES participation. Sec’y note: it’s been great, folks, and I wish you all the best. 73!
- 2. SUMMER FIELD DAY RESULTS.** FD has been run since 1935; purposes are many, but geared to perfecting/using radio “in the field.” Competence developed in all areas, but with specific areas including, for example, publicity, education, antennas, stations, portability, power. Modes used included CW, phone, digital. Team work was nurtured! The NF4AC results for Field Day were spectacular: we were the **top F group in the entire county**...and only one group in NFL exceeded our results – and they were a 7A effort, with over 40 participants. There

were 90 groups in NFL. Our division is one of the biggest in all of ARRL. Gordon KX4Z showed the points by operator...even Tech class operators were getting contacts, and those with “lower” point scores nevertheless provided support that doesn’t show up in mere numbers. This was contribution in invaluable other ways – such as Earl Sloane, who did fantastic work in taking care of nutrition requirements.

3. **PROGRAM TOPIC #1. ALACHUA ARES GROUP REPORT ON THE INTER-COUNTY REGIONAL AUXCOMM/EMCOMM GROUP MEETING.** This recent meeting was at the Flagler County EOC; Brett Wallace reported on the results. He began by describing the Flagler end of month exercises hosted by Ryan Simpson. Now that Marion County is getting on board, Marion is expanding the basic Flagler effort to include more more groups. The meeting recounted by NH2KW took place today, 10 December 2025. The meeting encompassed representatives from eight counties and some others (such as the Villages) that are below the county level but which are nevertheless important. Brett listed the assets of the various groups; surprisingly, all the participants are SHARES capable. Citrus needs SHARES help, and we have offered to help them. NVIS has been part of the discussion, as we’re trying HF during the day. All in all, it was a useful effort to establish the inventory of frequencies (HF, VHF, etc) and modes (phone, digital). It was good to see how everyone is organized. Some of the groups (such as local hospital support) don’t need to have regional comms; but important to be able to plug into groups that can provide this. Brett says that Flagler’s EOC isn’t organized by ESF, and isn’t necessarily a clone of ICS grouping protocols – however, their organization shows who success doesn’t mandate a “one sized fits” all approach. Because of an issue, the data inputs requested of the groups weren’t available for meeting discussion. But the six counties that participated in the meeting nevertheless did in fact provide data. KX4Z said it took him an hour to develop the data that Alachua put into the data call. NH2KW gave an overview of ALE; Brett asked the group participants to give a use case for ALE; one county said that using ALE prevented interference. Brett’s view is that we shouldn’t put too much effort into ALE if the State isn’t in fact using it (a problem stemming from Tallahassee’s amateurs lacking tech skill). Gordon says, however, that ALE can alert that someone wants to communicate with someone...at that point a “private” call is possible “inside ALE,” with another approach for that being outside ALE: transitioning to straightforward amateur/SHARES for QSO. KX4Z thinks ALE won’t work because it’s too complicated for most operators. NH2KW thinks voice should be for tactical comms, but EOC to EOC should be something that allows for documenting contacts. Use ALE to just get someone’s attention? Brett recommends using FLDIGI to keep situational awareness, and use that in conjunction with JS8Call for text content.
4. **PROGRAM TOPIC #2. LICENSE CLASSES AND PLANNING.** 20 signed up, attendance dwindled to 3-5 over the course of months. Four participants have passed the Tech test, with zero failures; one has so far has joined our Groups.IO. One has passed the General test. KX4Z asked whether this is a good approach for a possible General Class course..cover in 8 meetings? Zoom or in Person only? Reid offered that this track record of 3-5 at the end is normal, and is not a failure. It is too bad that none of these class participants came to tonight’s meeting. Susan, KG4VWI, asked...who is interested in a General course? She recommending polling/testing the waters, so to speak, before proceeding. Susan liked the ARRL materials better than Stu...in her view their explanations are better than in the materials drafted by Stu. Brett likes Stu’s material. Reid said that educators are telling him that people don’t read – so material heavy on video is better. Reid recommended continuing with Tech level, because those who want to do a General can seem to do it on their own. KX4Z asked Susan for recommendations on how to test. Manish suggested that Reid can determine from his classes who will go on to General. Reid couldn’t

say, but was of the view that two will “go to General.” W4JIR recommended continuing the Tech class approach without spending effort on the General. Show of hands on Tech class: 10. Show of hands on doing a General class: 2 wanted General. Group consensus: Tech more appropriate.

5. PROGRAM TOPIC #3. WINLINK TRAINING AT EOC [SAT. OPPORTUNITY #1].

This will be a signoff opportunity. Reid will do an intro on setting up accounts on your own computer. Manish and Dave Huckstep will do Winlink HF. VHF Winlink will be taught by Earl Sloan. And least part will be advanced topics, hosted by Reid – these will include Forms, Catalog, etc. at 12:00 the group can adjourn to Sonny’s. This will be this coming Saturday, December the 13th. It would seem that most of the participants will be the teachers....Sign offs can be for Winlink, using and sending forms. Signoffs can also be for contacts on multiple bands.

6. PROGRAM TOPIC #4. ANNUAL CELEBRATION LUNCHEON DEC 26. Looks as if about five of us will attend.

7. PROGRAM TOPIC #5 WINTER FIELD DAY TRAINING CONFERENCE PLANNING.

The tentative agenda included a template for Winter Field Day training. KX4Z asks for input. Two talks per hour? Five or six people from Ocala have already signed up! Earl McDow recommended having discussion of ARDN microwave software. Gordon also asking for volunteers to teach the various topics: signup to teach was passed around. Can’t advertise date/time without getting a roster of volunteers to teach. Target is both to leadership track and to radio operator tracks. The proposal is that two tracks are taking place simultaneously. Developing volunteers is, for example, relevant to the leadership track of the Conference. Antennas...for the operators, so that they can, for example, see why verticals are not good for close in comms. See the training slides on the NFARC website for a detailed proposal of subjects/timing. Discussion...KX4Z took suggestions from meeting attendees, so this will result in modification of the conference proposed subjects/times. The meeting slides prepared by Gordon do not show that he’d scheduled for times to set up, etc. Purpose of the conference? Improve the results of the various groups that participate in WFD, but who haven’t done well in the past. Venue possibilities? New EOC is running behind – we’ll be in old EOC through February. Dave Huckstep has asked for permission to hold at the old EOC. We have pavement protectors and can with our abundant coax have antennas. We can also use RG316 out the front door to run a station out the door. We could probably, then, do three stations. If we go to the new EOC, we’ve have to set up everything de novo. San Felasco Ranger Station: problem there is that we can’t put anything in trees, and the facility is smaller than the old EOC. Final suggestion is to use the Gibby house. Discussion in group. Old EOC decided as the venue. As to overall concerns with the concept of the Conference, training agenda, and purpose, Brett suggested that Jeff Capehart take a group to come up with a revised agenda. KX4Z needs before the following week, because KX4Z will be on a cruise (good on you, Gordon!). W4JIR thinks we’re biting off more than we can chew. Adding the training conference to WFD is just too much for him; which is why he’s not agreeing to teach anything. Susan Halbert echoed that sentiment. KX4Z’s view is that three stations at the EOC won’t be a lot of effort. KX4Z asked for input by Saturday, because he’ll be unavailable afterwards. Jeff Capehart’s idea was that we set up for the various aspects of WFD, and use that as a learning template that the group can consider, rather than going with the template that is part of the agenda.

- 8. PROGRAM TOPIC #6 ARRL 10 METER CONTEST [SAT. OPPORTUNITY #2]** This will be at the Gibby Guest House...test of ground mounted expedient vertical versus elevated antennas. Let multiple ops have turns. Phone is worth 2 pts, CW is worth 4 pts. No digital for this contest. Paper logs/computer logs. Multipliers galore. Calculate CW and phone and then score separately. KX4Z went over the handout that he'd prepared, which included the rules, how "serials" work for DX foreign stations. The handout also included the logs, and a sheet for how to calculate the scores, including point for mode, multipliers, etc. The whole list of multipliers is not on the handout. We will do this on this coming Saturday before the Lab N'Lunch.
- 9. PROGRAM TOPIC #7 OR EXTRA MEETING DISCUSSIONS.** No additional discussion.
- 10. ADJOURNMENT.** At 2027 EDT. That's all, Folks, and bye bye!