Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES

September 9, 2026

Attendance 13: The meeting was held at the Gainesville Christian Community School at 1540 NW 34th street and via ZOOM.

Gordon Gibby
Jeff Capehart
Susan Halbert
Judith Rosemary Jones
Earl McDow
Mark McDow
Ron Lewis
Brian Joy
Manish Sahni
Earl Sloan
Dean Covey

Via Zoom:

Brett Wallace
Mike Hasselbeck

- Introductions.
- MINUTES FROM **JULY and AUGUST 2026** meetings were approved.
- PREVIOUS MONTH ARES HOURS REPORT. 73 hours for August 2026.
- **OLD BUSINESS**

  AI/Artificial Intelligence Large Language Model (LLM) Construction.
  Brett noted that a committee had discussed and reviewed what was presented at the prior meeting. Further discussion was closed and no more activity was planned at this time.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

  Move-In to the New EOC
  No certificate of occupancy has been issued for the building yet. They are only open regular business hours. For badges, EM will be doing them instead of HR or the Sheriff. The Radio Room has about 200 square feet of usable space. It is on the 1st floor in the

NW corner of the building. There are no passthroughs or antennas yet. It could take a year.

- **PROGRAM** Special Talk: Greenbank Radio Telescope
  Dean presented some amazing information on the Milky Way Galaxy, M33, and 1420 MHz reception with a 20-meter dish radio telescope. Fascinating information about using detections, observations, math, and calculations to determine how fast a celestial object is moving away from us using doppler.

- **Lab-N-Lunch**
  Gordon mentioned there will will be two LabNLunch opportunities in September one started Saturday 9/12 to build grounding wires and begin Ron's Rotator and the other on Saturday 9/19 building a go-box for the new ICOM718 radio.

- **How to Grow?**
  Gordon led discussion of attendance dropping off, membership in ARES dropping, and the need to increase growth and retention. Comments and ideas were solicited from those in attendance. The list is included in the notes for the official record:
    - Meetings might be too far for some people to drive. (Zoom is an option)
    - We can't have attrition exceed new member growth
    - Classes from the Tech/General have been successful methods to recruit new hams
    - GARS has been growing like mad (Library programs, Veteran's Day events)
    - Are people looking in other places like Meetup, Nextdoor, FB and not finding us?
    - Can we appeal to the outlying cities since Gainesville is central?
    - GARS is more of a fun club; ARES is a service club. We need to focus on service
    - Make radio the tool that facilitates service for new recruits
    - Learning new things was a big draw to be involved in ARES and Ham Radio
    - Can we solicit new members at the Alachua County Library?
    - We should offer additional classes like Skywarn, CERT, etc.
    - TEEX offers Disaster Prep training classes if you have a room and 20 people
    - A library or group presentation as an overview of service with ham radio
    - Scouts – scouting seems to be on the decline nationally

- **Reaching Youngsters for Ham Radio / Technology**
  Gordon provided an update on the technology course being taught at GCCS. So far 16 students have enrolled, and 2 or 3 hams have volunteered to help out with instruction. An instructor from GCCS is teaching the course although he doesn't have a ham license yet.

- **PROJECT: Hands-on SWR Measurement**
  Gordon brought out a box full of SWR meters, coax, dummy loads, T-Connectors, and a hand-held radio. Ron provided an HF QRP radio. Volunteers were selected to demonstrate how to connect the meter, calibrate it, and check for reflected power to determine the SWR of a connected antenna. The test was performed twice with each radio using an un-matched load and a matched load to see how the meter would react.

- **ADJOURNMENT**. At 2039 EST.