

NFARC Club

MINUTES April 10, 2019

ATTENDING – 12

Gordon Gibby

Jeff Capehart

Chris Carr

John Troupe

Rosemary Jones

David Huckstep

Vann Chesney

Leland Gallup

Alvin Osmena

Mike Shaffer

Lynn Hatker WX4NFL, Gilchrist County

Earl McDowd

Meeting called to order at 18:58

Minutes from March meeting approved with amendment of date (2019, not 2013)

Attendees roll call

Agenda topics, in sequence as listed on agenda hung on the NFARC web page.

1. **March for Babies.** Briefed by Vann Chesney, AC4QS, who received a round of applause for excellent job preparing a suite of ICS documents to plan and execute this event supported by amateur radio operators. Assignments covered for March for Babies event scheduled for 13 April at Celebration Pointe. Show time 0700. Members previously recruited to staff stations polled for ability to appear on Sat. COL Huckstep not available. Cheryl Carr will appear. Parking passes covered. ICS 201 covered with what the organizers want from ARES and what we should bring for personal health and welfare. ICS 205 covered. We will be using the .820 repeater. .985 and .685 are secondary and tertiary. Simplex is 146.550. All channels label tactical, but use them in order.

2. **Traffic practice.** Gordon, KX4Z showed the Radiogram messages that are filled in a variety of books that were given to leaders designated in advance to head one of four teams tasked with passing and receiving traffic. Traffic net is the portable repeater, brought by KX4z; there are also two simplex channels. Channel 4 on Gordon programmed Baofengs; simplex two is Channel 11 on Gordon Baofengs. Plan is that teams disperse and check in and list traffic. Warning by Gordon...there are "crazies" in the messages, such as message counts that might wrong. Ended at 1940. Traffic handled by only two teams. Gordon went over the prowords. Priority spelled out. Don't say station of origin, just give the numbers for check. Addresses to Comm 4 should have used "figures" 4; otherwise it was supposed to have been copied as Comm For. X Ray for period, but not at the end of the body. Use "initials" "mixed figures" Obvious that CW is easier than phone. "All before" 98.6 degrees is "9 8 decimal 6." Will do traffic on the Thursday night ARES net.

3. **CERT Academy.** Briefed by John, KM4JTE. Community Emergency Response Team. Sponsored by DHS. ARRL is affiliated with CERT. ICS forms used so that the partners in the programs can use

the same documents. Used to be called civil defense. CERT is trying to get a critical mass of people through the CERT Academy so they can do exercises. CERT comms outside the group is by using cell phones with apps. Allan West is a liaison with CERT. Once critical mass is reached they'll teach first aid, search and rescue, natural disaster response; after they get there, John is convinced they can see our utility as hams when the cell towers don't work.

3. AAR for SET March 2019. Leland, AA3YB, and Susan, KG4VWI, went over the AAR improvement plan. Overall, the SET may have been technically disappointing, but AA3YB pointed out that the participant numbers were larger than ever before. ARES inter-operated well with the Alachua County Fire and Rescue, which taught us a lot about procedures and the differences between formal and informal (tactical) messages. AA3YB noted that many of the failures would have had a better chance of being more rapid successes had there been pre-briefs the night before the exercise, so leaders could task organize their personnel and spend time gaining situational awareness and actually directing others what to do without themselves having to operate. More clarity and direction, as well as intervention by controllers, is a need that has to be better implemented in future. Members need common operating protocols to pass phone messages, and net control procedures have to be improved. AA3YB offered that steps are already being taken to improve this absolutely basic skill for ARES members: traffic practice done Thursday, 4 April, over the ARES net and will take place on the ARES net for 11 April; moreover, the traffic practice done tonight is another step in carrying out improvement plan suggestions from the SET. Another is familiarity through frequent use of equipment. To advance that goal, AA3YB will be on 10m and 14 meters, every five minutes, from 2:00pm to 3:00pm Sunday, 14 April. No stress, just talk. No pressure, no time constraints, no "gotchas" that have to be resolved. Just keying mics and talking. Improving message handling, net procedures, and familiarization with equipment will build on the "late in the game" success achieved at the SET.

4. Alachua ARES task plan. In view of the many reported technical and procedural issues revealed by the March 2019 SET, the Club unanimously approved adoption of the Task Plan for certification in Alachua ARES. Purpose is to improve member skills and document what the members have done by way of courses and demonstrated actual operating skills and abilities.

5. RM-11831 update. Gordon, KX4Z, discussed a number of comments he has submitted to the FCC in response for a petition for rule making. The petitioner, one Dr. Rappaport, urges the FCC to "kill" almost all digital transmission modes except for RTTY. Petitioner's reasoning, among other things, is premised on a view that conventional amateur digital modes, especially PACTor, take up too much space in the band plan, especially in the CW areas. Said that digital modes are "landmines" in the CW band, taking up too much bandwidth, etc. In preparing his response(s) to the Petition, KX4Z has done some factual research; among other things, he discovered some digital operators are in fact using out of band transmissions, but this is an education issue. Gordon has passed to various section managers a warning about digital ops that were not in line with the rules as they currently are. Gordon has pulled the records for "221c" stations and the total time on 20m bands for all stations together was minimal. 352 minutes out of 20000 for 40. 12 thousandths of one percent of the band was being used by digital modes on (40). The petitioner is flat out wrong about the scope of digital usage. The Petition also argued that digital modes are in effect "encrypted" and present a national security risk. But Gordon shows that there have been no national security implications in the area governed by the FCC; the examples cited by Petitioner are a decade or so past and came from what was happening, for example, in Europe during Russian incursions in Georgia. Petitioner also states that digital is "not legal if it can't be completely understood in fr e." Winlink in the past three weeks forces a new ID in CW so the problem of unrecognized ID are no longer a Winlink issue: anyone who can hear a Winlink "QSO" will be able to copy "in the clear" the ID's of the operators received. Gordon also showed new Winlink

system that has been put in so that every message sent through Winlink can be read by anyone. New system! But apparently this isn't good enough for the backers of the Petition. Gordon then asked in his responses that since PACTOR has been around a long time and Winlink's source code is open there has been complete de facto acceptance by the FCC of the legality of these modes (except for PACTOR IV without specific temporary authorities). Petitioner Rappaport has been on this for three years and claims to be an expert. Gordon has read lots of his writings. Rappaport believes that PACTOR is a security risk; Gordon told them that he could, and did in minutes figure out how to "read" received PACTOR messages. This means that PACTOR messages can be read by anyone who receives/overhears the message. Gordon told how to post a comment with the FCC for addressing the Petition. So, in several vital respects, Petitioners factual assertions are just wrong; this casts into doubt without anything else the merits of his Petition for Rule-making.

6. Statewide Hurricane Exercise. Jeff Capehart, 4UFL, discussed what he knows about an initial statewide initial planning meeting on Feb 22 for the conduct of the exercise (to be held in May). Volunteer FL groups, too are involved in the planning. Coordinator of SERTrack was there, saying that information with details is supposed to be out there for release to public agents. Alachua M has three priorities, one of which is communications, another is shelters, third is log planning. This particular exercise will call for shelter employees not already assigned a role in emergency management to participate as support team. Shelter management and ops training will come in April, and perhaps will be out in SERTrack. Jeff recommended that people take the training so that others will know what amateur radio can offer. He covered that we ARES folks are being asked to participate as volunteers, for example by manning the EOC radio room. It will be an exercise that calls for the hurricane to pass over our region on the Wednesday/Thursday May 8/9. These days are the meat of the exercise. Suggestion made to contact D. Herding to ask if he needs/can take volunteer radio ops.

7. Single transistor amplifier. Gordon showed a back-of-napkin schematic for a one transistor amplifier. Three or four more weeks will be used to go over this.

8. MARC public service day. Gordon, KX4Z, and Shannon Boal learned how to raise the enormously tall antenna of the MARC unit. Lt Kevin Rulapaugh coached on how to put it up. The exam was the next day with Gordon and Shannon and fire fighters putting the tower up with the standoffs. Helped the firefighters understand the difference between the VHF and HF antennas. Showed the hand cranks and levels to raise. Gordon was elected COMML and was coached through their repeaters, including ways to overlap repeaters with the ACUM to connect cross-band transceivers. Gordon says by using two Signalinks and two cross band transceivers we could make versions of this. Contacts were made. Alachua county's stuff worked, but people from different counties were clueless as to frequencies to use. Now we know who in Alachua county uses what, so we can mesh with them if we need to in the future. Gordon's spectrum analyzer has been shipped today, but Lt Rulapaugh has a 30\$k spec analyzer in his truck. May 3 and 4th, the Baptists will conduct training, asked Gordon to appear as a trainer. Dinner in Orlando is Friday night. Training is on Sat/Sun and background checks required. The Baptists have a tower on a trailer. The Baptists have an ancient version of the MARC unit, so Gordon told him we could test, and knows who could refurbish. We'll see if this works.

9. Report on Races background check. Jeff Capehart, W4UFL, showed a compilation of members who who have turned in the forms required, and was able to assess who had turned in what. The compilation tracked members' courses taken, photos, etc. Talked about why CERT training, and background check for a lot of CERTs were done....but good news is that CERT will pay for badging and backgrounds checks. We will be informed of when we can do the badging (after the background check) is done. So EC-001 is going to be waived because of the problem that the course (as of now) is

available only online, and all student slots for the year are filled. COL Huckstep says that if he gets the list from Jeff Capehart, he has discussed with the Health dept can do the background check take in (fingerprints and photos) it if ASO can't do it...we asked for dates/times to be put out with enough advance warning that we can accommodate schedules. Gordon, KX4Z, has been approved as a field teacher/mentor for EC-001 – and the teacher slide deck is 600 slides. Will take four months with one session on Saturday. Begin in May. Send Gordon schedules so we know what the best dates are in Saturday to begin.

Meeting adjourned at 2110, April 10.