

# Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

## MINUTES

November 8, 2023

Attendance: 18. Meeting held in person at the Queen of Peace Catholic Community; and via Zoom .

Gordon Gibby  
Jeff Capehart  
Rosemary Jones  
Leland Gallup  
Craig White  
Susan Halbert  
Eric Pleace  
Manish Sahni  
Dean Covey  
Earl McDow  
David Huckstep  
Jeff Capehart  
Lorilyn Roberts  
Reid Tillery (Zoom)  
Brad Swartz (Zoom)  
Wendell Wright (Zoom)  
Amy WA4AMY (Zoom)  
Mike KD4INH (Zoom)

**Introductions.** From 1830 until 1900 when the meeting commenced. The NFARC/NF4AC radio club met for this month in person at the Queen of Peace Catholic Community and via ZOOM.

- 1. INTRODUCTION/NON-APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 2023 MINUTES.** KX4Z talked about ways for amateurs to integrate with our group, via Groups.io/NVARC, to get immediate updates. There is a new web page [nf4rc.club](http://nf4rc.club). October meeting minutes approved. Also discussed microphone switchover assemblies for the Go-Boxes and described what the group approved. Jeff Capehart able to get us 13 more? We also need 14 6” Ethernet cables. Earl McDow offered to lead on that, since he has spare Ethernet cable.
- 2. PRESENTATION OCTOBER SECTION HOURS.** Jeff Capehart did report them, but was not present for the meeting at this moment; he came later but was not asked for a breakdown of the reported numbers. POTA events included in the numbers report.
- 3. EOC STAFFING POLICY DISCUSSION AND VOTE.** Last month, KG4VWI proposed that the current standard for accession unsupervised to the EOC radio room be reconsidered. The issue now on the table is whether to drop the ARRL Level III requirement for completing the ICS Professional Development Series from the Alachua County Level 3 (the first section of the Alachua EOC Task Book requires completion of all of the ARRL Level 3). KG4VWI led the discussion; she said the current 40 hours of the Pro Development series is onerous. She suggests we drop this requirement. Susan did take one of the courses – volunteer development.

That being said, in her view the course was irrelevant to what we do. She thinks that the Pro Series is not helpful – learning how to run the equipment in the radio room is what she regards as more important. Perhaps for the ARRL Level III the Pro Development Series is more pertinent, but she is firmly of the view that the Pro Series is not relevant to operating unsupervised in the EOC radio room. Eric Pleace asked whether dropping the Pro Series is within our control: answer – yes. Susan: “I want to be able to run a radio, not an organization.” Eric largely agreed with her. Dean Covey and Earl McDow took the same course, and they all spent on average 3 plus hours. KX4Z said that the course (volunteer) is illustrative as how the EOC group should treat us. There is more material on other aspects of the overall ICS system as it is used by EOCs, in the discussed courses. And those, KX4Z maintained, can be of use. Earl suggested evaluating each of the courses to see if they could be of use. David Huckstep agreed with Susan – much of this is not required to operate radios in the EOC – or even shelters. W4JIR suggested that as auxiliary communicators that should be our principal concern. We are adults, as he says, so the Pro Development series is not critical – what is critical is that we have people who can operate the radios in the EOC or the go boxes. Item 3 of Level 2 (G-191)... KG4VWI suggests that this be dropped because this requires out of town travel and is difficult for people to do. Also recommends dropping all the Pro Series requirements of ARRL Level III from the ARES EOC taskbook. Brad Swartz said that Columbia County is behind Alachua as to formal training. KX4Z’s recollection is that Nassau County is more training intensive than our county, because their volunteers also serve in other capacities of the EOC’s operations. KX4Z read the various levels of the EOC task book to the group so that we could be more definite as to voting on deleting requirements from the Task Book. **The group votes to keep Level One of the EOC Task Book as is.** Now the discussion turned to Alachua EOC Task Book Level II. Alachua Level II requires ARRL course EC-001, and ICS 100, 200 700, and 800 as far as standardized training in concerned in the ICS system. As to standardized training, our EOC Level II requires G-191 and IS 2200. Other requirements for the EOC Task Book included practical operating skills. KG4VWI described IS 2200 and recommended that we retain this. Reid Tillery suggested an intern system with mentors who can check things off from time to time. **Motion: drop G-191 from the EOC Task Book altogether. Ten voted in favor. Two voted nay. The motion carries. No other changes to Level Two. Level Two retained as is without G-191: 12 in favor. No opposition. The motion carries.** Now the Level III discussion: KX4Z read off the list of what the ARRL NFL Level III requires in terms of IS and G courses, as well as all the practical operational requirements. Consensus is that there is no difficulty with the ARRL Level III, and hence the EOC Task Book Level III, except for the first item of the EOC Task Book. That first element says that “all” of the NFL Section III is required in order to “check that box” for the EOC Task Book. KG4VWI proposes eliminating the PDS and EC-016. The PDS now is 120; 230; 235; 240; 241; 242 and 244. 288 is not in the ARRL NFL Section III list, but is currently considered part of the PDS. EC-016 is, of course, an ARRL course. KX4Z read the other elements of the EOC Task Book (the elements in addition to that first section requiring all of the NFL ARRL Level III Task Book. **Motion: that the first section of Level III of the EOC Task Book retain the ARRL Level III requirement, except the NFL ARRL Level III requirement for IS courses 120, 230, 235, 240, 241, 242, and 244 be removed. To the extent that 288 might be required for ARRL Level 3, it should also be eliminated. Moreover, EC-016 should also no longer be required.** The motion was discussed. Steve Panaghi suggests that we keep the required listing, as it is good to understand the system. **The motion is altered to use “Suggested” for these courses as opposed to “Required.” Vote on the amended motion: 13 vote in favor of the motion; one abstention. The amended motion carries.**

- 4. LESSONS LEARNED AT THE POTA BRUNCH AND PRACTICE TRAINING.** The group discussed the likes/dislikes arising out of this last session. Topics on the table included whether the 20m bandpass filter may cause/have a bad connection. Suggestions sought for improvements and what assets might be useful. Go box ideas and techniques suggestions including learning how to “spot.” Number of participants actually submitted logs.
- 5. EAST GAINESVILLE RADIO ASSETS.** K9RFT discussed new antennas that will provide enhanced reach by VHF stations in the eastern side of Alachua County. This work, together with proven simplex paths, will enhance ARES’ members capacity for covering hitherto lesser served areas. Reid talked about hitting the EOC from Cross Creek, Melrose, and Waldo. New antennas put up by Reid – at Melrose, Windsor, and Cross Creek. Tech Class at Cross Creek...perhaps the end of January.
- 6. WINTER FIELD DAY PLANNING – ANTENNA UPDATE.** KX4Z described testing of commercial EFHW antennas by Myantenna.com, with surprising results...sometimes paying more for commercial kit actually gets you more. KX4Z’s concept of Winter Field Day will be one multi band antenna able to handle 300-400 watts, perhaps with a quintplexer.
- 7. DECEMBER LUNCHEON UPDATE.** The luncheon is tentatively scheduled for December 9, which is a Saturday. This is not the GARS luncheon. Los Pollos is the location, on 43 Street. About 1130. GARS luncheon is on the 16<sup>th</sup>.
- 8. INNOVATIVE ALERTING AND MESSAGE STRATEGIES FOR WINTER FIELD DAY.** Techniques and ideas include having operators provide a list of their cell phone numbers capable of receiving texts...so they can be alerted on the fly as to mode and band of Winter FD operations. Discussion of how the rules provide flexibility for live alerting. Another is to have members learn how to use FLDIGI for purely acoustic digital coupling, so that messages could be send via, for example, MSFK-16, which allows some (forward) error correction. This was done today (8 Nov) from the EOC. Reid Tillery participated in helping this along. He suggest that ARES group members be asked to practice this. We have an article posted on the website. KX4Z suggested a preformatted message that could be sent out over WFD using either MSFK-16 (acoustic coupling) or via CW. He also suggested that Net Control Stations for the ARES weekly nets use this technique to conduct a practice session as part of the Net. Jeff Capehart agreed to look into it.
- 9. UPDATE: CORNERSTONE CW TRAINING CLASS.** Lorilyn described her teaching method, using an old audio...the original War of the Worlds broadcast. The end of that original broadcast included an amateur calling CQ...and no one answering. Her kids are copying perhaps 5 wpm.
- 10. WINTER FIELD DAY PLANNING: SCHEDULING.** KX4Z will demonstrate a simple text based method for setting up and managing Winter Field Day operating schedules. Slots open on December 1. Planning for 3 or maybe 4 people. KX4Z recommends getting into the Groups.io website for a scheduling method. The contest is a 24 hour event, but setting up the equipment won’t take long. If there are people for 4 stations, we will do four. Quintplexer supports five total.

- 11. LICENSING DISCUSSION.** Issue on the table is whether to have “our own” set of ARES Volunteer Examiners who could conduct licensing exams in those months when the “normal” GARS VE team is not conducting exam sessions. Another topic for consideration is how to raise more HF operators for our ARES deployments and purposes. No resolution of whether to have a tech class in January.
- 12. Sbitx REPORT.** KX4Z showed how, with his modifications, the sSbitx now passes the spurious emission rules (-43dB) Experiment where output of the finals went directly through the low pass filters.
- 13. ADJOURN** at 2047, 8 November 2023.