

Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES

May 8, 2024

Attendance: 12. The meeting was held in person at the Alachua County Emergency Operations Center on South Hawthorne street in SE Gainesville and online via ZOOM. Meeting attendees are not specifically noted as attending live and in person or via ZOOM.

Gordon Gibby
Leland Gallup
Eric Pleace
Manish Sahn
Earl Sloan
Reid Tillery
Jeff Capehart
Rosemary Jones
Earl McDow
Susan Halbert
Mike Hasselbeck WB2FKO (Zoom)
David Huckstep

Introductions. From 1830 until 1900 when the meeting commenced.

- 1. INTRODUCTION/APPROVAL OF A 2024 MINUTES/ARES HOURS.** April: 292 hours, with 177 from training events; 30 from monthly meeting and another 30 or so from exercises. For March, out of the Section, there were 2321 hours from reporting groups. Our report was 112 hours (March). We did 5% of the Section hours in March. As far as activities, W4UFL has breakdown if folks want more. April minutes approved.
- 2. REVIEW OF SHELTER HAM RADIO OPERATION ICOM ID-4100/POLICE RADIO.** Rosemary talked the basics of getting badged with the County. Simple ICS course requirement. She reiterated the necessity of the shelter go-boxes as useful during real emergencies when power is out and shelters are occupied with residents. Rosemary believes the go-box radios may not be toned for the repeaters. She recommends an exercise that deploys the radios and see whether the radios can reach the EOC, either direct or via repeater; this has already been done at least once. Talked the need for recording volunteer hours in the case of announced emergencies. Reid proposed what Putnam county does; they use the Coast Guard auxiliary and their frequencies – they staff the shelters. One idea might be to use Coast Guard auxiliary as an adjunct group; they could communicate on their frequencies to the EOC. This is an idea that might work under some circumstances. Don't know if the Coast Guard auxiliary frequencies can be programmed in the go-box radios. Rosemary walked through the sequence: repeater down, then which shelters can reach the EOC. This has already been done. KX4Z showed the few requirements to qualify for applying to get a badge. This takes weeks/months to gather/batch enough to have the EOC issue a badge. KX4Z says a number of our badges will expire in the next year or so. Discussion of levels of badging. Discussion of the Icom go-box radio in the go-

boxes, and how, using the Quick Menus, to turn on the tone so that the repeaters can be accessed.

- 3. REVIEW OF FL QSO PARTY EXPEDITION.** Discussion of the risks of tick-borne diseases. Earl's wife had almost died from tick infection. Methods to prevent ticks biting. Recommended draft improvement plan items: Better notification technique; additional tow vehicles; greased stabilizer screws; adding traffic cones; notification of pre-practice opportunities; more experienced lead teams; more flexible headset splitters; and more people bringing code keys. More: retrain memorizing CW and voice; more wood blocks for stabilizers; fixing the 40m quintplexer (apparently bad coax jumper); one to one choke on the back of the trailer needs to be improved/made beefier. Mast on the generator trailer could be bettered, and the wood bottom on the generator trailer needs to be shorted; band charts and recommended frequencies; have power meter on the output of the Quintplexer so you can tell if it's working. Always have opportunities for socializing. More explaining QSO techniques. AA3YB stressed that the group had different objectives from other FL QSO groups: we deployed, redeployed, and operated for limited periods. Not quite accurate to compare QSO counts with stationary groups, etc. KX4Z showed screen shots of the AARP on the website. Dr Sahni recommended we have an emergency first aid box with essentials for preventing insect bites, removing ticks, etc. This was added to the improvement list. Earl McDow stressed that computers need to be loaded with the logging software and tested BEFORE the events; otherwise bringing machines (as happened in Winter Field Day) causes much confusion. Rosemary will check on AED machines with Rulapaugh. There is an AED at Cuscowilla. The AAR with improvements is approved by the group.
- 4. REVIEW OF INITIAL ARRL FIELD DAY PLAN.** KX4Z noted that only he is writing the IAPs. He gets tired doing this. So then we started doing ARRL activities that show how much improvement we have made as a group when it comes to experience and technical proficiency. This year FD will be at Cuscowilla. Two towers (?) plus the MARC tower. We expect four stations. Because this is not an alternate EOC, we have to provide our own power for transmissions and stuff (computers) associated with transmissions. We plan on diesel generators and potentially batteries/solar charging. KX4Z showed photos of the Lodge and its facilities. Suggestion that we separate socializing from operating stations. Public outreach: we will have 100 points for a table and another batch of points for the fact that the public can use the pools. Showed photo with potential antennas. We have special permission to be there overnight, and the facility is closed to the public at evening. We may be in fact be "locked in" after dark. We have permission as a county "operation" to use this facility. At night the bands will be such that 20m is still good out to 10:00pm (west coast). We have had to come up with ways to operate on 80 and 160. There were some issues operating on those bands during the 23 FD; but this year no contests during FD that will disturb us. Showed a slide with a proposed "Field Day Simplified Antenna Setup." Issue of isolating the two operating areas/antennas discussed; methods for increasing isolation. Need to be able to pull this off if we're to operate on 160/80/40 simultaneously. We don't have a 160 tap on our Quintplexer, but KX4Z is working on it. Next slide showed asset construction for Field Day – Suggestions (Listed in IAP Section 10). These included comfortable chairs. 3 Element beam – this has been problematic. Closed to having it fixed...but still issues. Build/convert Qplexor 80/160 port to 160 low pass filter (allows separate 80/160 dual op); need to build new 15m bandpass. Build 160m external bandpass or LPF to complete 160m effort. Possible build: 20m ultrasharp receiving filter(s) [help dual usage of 20m]; Possible build: 40m same as above 20m. Next discussion: Class A power (emergency power since this is not an alternate EOC location so allowing mains power). Gordon has AC

line chokes to go on the extension cords from the generators. Network router is OK to be on mains, because its not part of the transmission sequence. Group doesn't like extension cord concept for the 600' run to the secondary operating site in the cabin. Many offered to bring in batteries (charged, with trickle chargers), if this would help with the extension cord issue. For solar, David Huckstep ep has a nice MPPT controller, but will need a filtering system (build); other things on KX4Z's slide that the secretary did not copy...Need an oil change (joke). KX4Z is going to be very busy for a considerable period during the run up.

5. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COMMUNICATIONS AND 80 NEIGHBORHOODS.

W4UFL picked up the discussion for this item. Noted how much Reid Tillery is doing on the east side with GMRS, etc. There are 80 Alachua County “neighborhoods” outside Gainesville. These have names and there is a list of the names that can be found on the NF4RC website. Some of these can be very large. There is a map with these neighborhoods. KX4Z put up the link from NF4RC that had a spreadsheet/doc with a list of these neighborhoods. W4UFL talked about the map of the neighborhoods on our website, and then talked about various programs that can be used as blueprints with modifications for our area. We need people to research all of this stuff to assimilate, study, etc., and come up with a good program. Solicitation for someone to take responsibility for this. Tillery suggests that we call this a “radio safety net” because it doesn't sound like law enforcement. He also found that actually giving radios/showing to people in neighborhoods helps create some user density. KX4Z asked “how can we make this useful” to Alachua County EOC? Discussion ensued as to how such idea might play out. W4UFL ended with “we don't have a plan” for how this would be handed off to the EOC as a program.

6. SIMPLEX NETWORK DATA COLLECTION. Eric described what the GARS group is doing, and related his experience from this last Saturday. Eric asked for a script/protocol for how simplex operations work. There was confusion about how to handle ops/a script for running a simplex “network.” Eric asked for an email relating what happened and how to improve the running of the simplex system. KX4Z again stated that he doesn't understand the value of the product and the end product. Eric wants a protocol, and Reid actually found he could hear folks that he was surprised by. Eric is not looking for results, he is looking for a script that Eric can write up and will provide. Simplex idea is simple in its utility: merely to provide individuals with some notion as to whom they might be able to reach – directly or through relay – in an emergency. It's just comms pathway data.

7. ADJOURNMENT. At 2054 hours EDT.