

Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES

JULY 8, 2020

Meeting held via ZOOM, instead of in person at the American Red Cross, Gainesville Red Cross, 6th Ave NW and 16th St

Attendance: 15 altogether

Eart K4ZSW

Jeff Capehart

Susan Halbert

Mike KD4inh

Rosemary Jones

Judy K4DF

John KJ4PZ

COL David Huckstep

Leland Gallup

Vann Chesney

John Trites No5x

Craig Fugate

Jim Bledsoe

Brady Nettina

[and apologies to one participant whose ID I failed to record]

Meeting called to order at 1901

Minutes for June 2020 Meeting **approved**.

Introductions and discussion with Brady Nettina, Emergency Management Alachua County, concerning what the EOC for Alachua County could use from our volunteers. Brady sent a letter to us today 8 July with a list of volunteer tasks that the EOC could really use our help in doing. Mr. Grieb: "We are in April even though it's July" as far as hurricane season is concerned. Meaningful but not exciting. Can't effectively operate our EOC without this being done. The tasks included: surplus tagging for old EOC equipment; this embraces, e.g., a lot of old chairs that need to be tagged so that they can go to public auction. EOT binder assembly for each member of the Emergency Operations Team when the EOT is activated. Also surplus a/v equipment. The equipment is currently in a building somewhere else; facilities is holding them in a building apart from the normal surplus building. Established 1030 on Saturday and 0900 on Monday.

1. **FIELD DAY 2020 After Action Report.** Section Chiefs first, then open discussion.
2. **PLANNING.** John NO5X thanked all for offering him the opportunity to learn the ICS planning process. Learned a lot. Has ready the after action comments, and will incorporate in future. Week early dress rehearsal seemed to have been an excellent part of the planning process. Asked about the John designed filters. Ran out of humans to do. Filters appeared to work well, even if not really necessary as things turned out. Also mentioned that bonus points and how they are compiled should be in the ICS final form so that it is clear what should

happen. Points submission was tricky and had to be done several times before it worked. Gordon agreed to do the AAR that would be presented to Hal Grieg.

3. **LOGISTICS.** Rosemary thanked Mike Ridlon with actually getting stuff moved. Asked for help in the future. At times it was difficult to establish what people needed to bring in order to make FD a success.
4. **OPERATIONS.** AA3YB ascribed the group's FD success to prior planning and the dress rehearsal the week before. FD a good job for a first-time by the group. Operators needed in greater numbers to make FD a more points-rewarding venture; it's both fun and more training for operators. Took only 50 minutes to completely close down and vacate the EOC and the NW site at the conclusion of the event. Earl McDow described the superb MESH/Microwave/WiFi system that was able to penetrate an 18" wall and deliver real time data. Screens showed where things were located and the individual nodes and access points.
5. **PIO.** Jim Bledsoe got great pieces out to the media. Really good media spot that went out on Channel 20. Carolyn Starr-Tanner had materials prepared. Posters on the ARRL web site will be something that we could do for next year. Bledsoe said that he felt lucky to get Channel 20 to come out. As many as 100k people potentially viewed. Our stuff was listed on the ARRL web page. Hal Grieg said that he really appreciated the exposure we gave to the EOC as well, which meant that this was good for EOC-ARES interaction! Nothing seemed to have come from the Channel 5 interview as far as immediately released footage.
6. **FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING.** Susan asked if there were any bills that need to be paid. Nothing, so discussion next turned to the Radiogram process that Susan did. Susan did an excellent job using the itinerant VHF RMS gateway, powered by a WiFi phone hotspot, to insert messages by VHF packet in to the process, gaining us bonus points.
7. **OPEN DISCUSSION: WHAT WENT GOOD/BAD DURING FD 2020.** Discussion moderated by KX4Z and was centered around ICS positions.

Incident Commander Job of the IC commander includes recruitment and just running around to make sure things get done. Planning is a "weird" group because planning needs to get input from all the other sections. Plan was very detailed. Next year's could use this year's ICS 201 and the AAR as template. PIO is obvious, but advance notifications are key. Gordon, Leland, made several overall comments. Jeff noted that our FD was more like a club operation, in that many things had to be brought and assembled, as if we were a Class A club. Jeff suggested that we might next year do a smaller EOC FD, and run it as a 1F so that there would be more cooperation/collaboration with the GARS group. Discussion of antennas and interference. We had very good isolation: 70db on 80 meter and 100db on 40. No interference. Possible we might have been able to operate on the same frequencies. We have confidence now that we can operate without risk to the receivers we use. Rosemary spoke up in favor of two separate FD operations (GARS and NFARC). We upped the overall Alachua operations by 80 percent this year by comparison with last year because we ran two entirely separate FD ops for Alachua County. We had more participation by far than last year, comprising at least two different FD club/group stations, and at least one from home (KN4IZZ). Gibby encouraged having people go back and forth between the two sites. GARS planned days in advance and did stuff NFARC planned much further in advance. COVID 19 may have been a factor in this year's overall participation rates. Full information shared with GARS. All materials went to them to help them. We did everything we could to benefit GARS. Craig KN4IZZ was a class D station. He

used 160 to 6 meters 20 watts. FT8 interesting. Learned how to pounce on stations. Went from 1700 to midnight. Was able to talk 10m to TX on SSB on a dipole. Is having problems with FT8 and the 7300. Has to redo the audio settings to make sure things will work. There is something about the driver that isn't stable. The rig will cycle to transmit but no power would go out. Discussion of RF and interference from the mics as a cause for the lockups. Craig KK4INZ had good operational tips for FD operations...if you don't get a response on the first try, move on immediately. Craig didn't attempt anything but FT8. Jeff mentioned that he'd look at the signal strength of a calling station and would use that as a method for selecting potential contacts. Craig had success even at -20. He'd pounce on the last station listed in a 15 section cycle. You can actually work two stations at the same time. He made 60 contacts. Recommended a week before FD going to ARRL's Facebook and Twitter feeds, with the EOC's call sign, and this will get our station known...and this could be very good for next year, as F stations will be at a premium for contacts. Facebook and Twitter are key to getting this out! Suggested looking at 160m and 10 and 6...not so much the congested main 40 and 20 bands. Get advertising that the NF4AC call sign is associated with an EOC and hence an F station. Then call CQ and people will be all over us. Talked about how WSJT-X's logging facility worked well, and was able to export the log for reporting purposes. FD results will be released by ARRL in September, more or less.

PIO: this and the other basic areas as follows all were touched upon to a greater or lesser extent, as generally covered already in discussions above.

Planning: ditto

Operations: ditto

Logistics: ditto

Finance and Accounting: ditto

8. **GENERAL CLASS COURSE.** We'll do a General Class course; EOC already said yes. 16 people can be there for the course with adequate social distancing for COVID 19. Earl will take Safety. Jim will take propagation. Leland will take procedures and practices, rules and regulations. Motion made to do the course in November. Everyone liked November. Hybrid ZOOM and real life. That's probably what will be the direction we'll take (November).
9. **BEATY TOWER REPAIRS.** Susan reports the whole station is down; whether it's battery is the issue, since Joe DiPietro said the Raspberry Pi and antenna are probably fine. All the equipment is on and powered...it just doesn't work, says Jeff Capehart. For what reason we don't know. A mystery. "Should be fine," except that it is not. Earl offered to go tomorrow (9 July) and actually check out the station to try and determine what is not working and why.
10. **DIGITAL NODE STATUS REPORTS.** Newberry node is working fine; DARK is working; Lake City stations (both) are actually reachable via Digipeater.
11. **BADGES AND CARDS: CREDENTIALLED VOLTS.** AA3YB stressed need for more volunteers, and that access is contingent upon established competence and, a personal connection/relationship with the EOC community. Showing up and being available is key to continued good support relationship with the Emergency Management community..

12. **ANNOUNCEMENTS BY KX4Z.** HF stations, two, are available to loan out. Need credentialed volunteers for local service. Touching on the training requirements for volunteers, Jeff Capehart said we need ICS 100,200, 700, and 800, as well as EC001. These are RACES requirements and are part of the CEMP. We've got 12 volunteers right now. Need mor EC001 is now online. Download entire course and work through it. Gallup agreed to get from Brady. where on Saturday to help. Rosemary, Susan, Gordon, will assist along with Leland. Leland will send email to the volunteers. Jeff talked about the say ahead for ARES and what's happening at HQ ARRL. We're tracking our volunteers in our Excel spreadsheet. Hal has suggested to set another deadline for ID badging, and will need to do that to get additional people to volunteer.

.Gordon recommended setting an end-August deadline; Capehart agreed that 31 August. Capehart agreed to set out a list of those most likely to be able to be included in the 2020 tranche.

COL Huckstep asked Gordon to say how many trickle chargers are needed. Six. COL H agreed to see if he can get some. Also asked whether ICS class certificaions “expire” if they are more than six years ago. Nothing hard and fast, says Gibby, Ask Hal Grieb if he wants to renew, says Grieb.

Badging. COL Huckstep says this may not be a problem, but they're renovating the ACSO Sheriff's office. This will be right in the middle of that...let COL H know specific date so he can help make it happen.

June minutes approved.

Meeting adjourned at 2113.