

Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES

August 11, 2021

Meeting held via ZOOM

Attendance: 20

Gordon Gibby
Susan Halbert
Leland Gallup
Jeff Capehart
Emily....
Brett Wallace
Earl McDow
Jim Bledsoe
Mike KD4INH
Reid Tillery
Vann Chesney
Mike WB2FKO
Bob Guertin
Dave Huckstep
Wendell Wright
Stuart Reisner
Dean Covey
John Trites
Rosemary Jones
Amy KO4IDO

Introductions. From 1830 until 1859 when the meeting commenced. Although the July 2021 meeting was held in person at the Alachua County EOC (and via Zoom), the return of COVID made an in-person meeting inadvisable. Consequently, the August 2021 meeting was solely by ZOOM.

1. **UPDATES ON BADGING NEW VOLUNTEERS.** W4UFL stressed that this is a good time to get folks badged. He will talk with the Emergency Manager, first, as Jen's first go around with ARES as the new permanent EMD. We have three or four who have completed the requirements. Let Jeff C know if you are an additional person who has completed the requirements. Asked if people wanted notifications by email on the storm prospects. Brett said he wanted, as did Reid. Jeff C said he'd do it.
2. **APPROVAL OF JULY 2021 MINUTES.** July 2021 minutes approved.
3. **AUXCOM POSITION TASK BOOK REVIEW.** North Carolina amateurs have upped the AUXCOM process in to the National Qualification System. There will be an ICS box with AUXCOM tagged, which will mean we'd be on our way to status as a typed resource. AA3YB and KX4Z discussed the background of AUXCOM and how AUXCOM has a task book

recognized by the Federal Government. The AUXCOM course is a requirement before you can begin the AUXCOM task book. The course acclimates one to how we are communicators, not ARES or RACES, and how we as amateur radio communicators can fit in to the AUXCOM world. We (Alachua ARES) have not pushed the AUXCOM task book in the past. We believe we could get the EOC to initiate the task book so that we can get signed off; books go to the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) who decides whether the certifications are any good. The FL SWIC is Ben Bass, who is the boss of Bob Little, who is ESF2 for FL Emergency Management Division. Reid Tillery asked how we can get the AUXCOM course. KX4Z described how through SERTRAC one can get notifications of when and where the course is held. The ARES task book higher levels are somewhat overlapping with the AUXCOMM task book. The AUXCOM Task book has to be initiated by an Agency Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) and plugs us in to how an incident command ICS/NIMS system works. In the Steinhachee Storm exercise we did a lot of that; we actually DO almost all of these taskers – there is overlap in that sense between the ARES and AUXCOMM task books. Carolyn Stark, at our Field Day, had KX4Z sign off on lots of FEMA forms so she got qualifications...KX4Z signed but doesn't know the significance for the "signee." ARES field personnel seem resistant to AUXCOM and pursuing the AUXCOM task book. Brett suggested we start with Dalton Herding to get the AHJ process started. KX4Z is part of GA AUXCOM, and gets their newsletters. Their AUXCOM folks do Winlink exercises, etc.

4. **TESTING ALACHUA COUNTY SHELTERS AND GO-BOXES UPDATE.** We have installed and tested all 14 go boxes for the 14 County shelters already wired and provided with antennas and operating locations. Five additional shelter possibilities...these would be in addition to the 14. We don't have antennas for the additional boxes. 14 polarity protectors are in the process of installation...we have "locked down" who will do the installations. W4JIR did 11 of the 14 shelters – for testing the go boxes and in situ testing their operations and the condition of the antennas. The majority of the sites can hit the EOC directly, we surmise, with the amateur equipment because in a majority of cases we could do so on the Public Safety systems. KX4Z has taken it upon himself to do the polarity protections, but he has not been able to accomplish because of many other taskers. He did describe the interior of the boxes have unshielded wiring...shorts with higher power DC and AC is clearly an issue. Bare lines in the go kits not a good idea.
5. **ARRL NATIONAL CONVENTION/HAMCATION PLANNING FORUM UPDATE.** Rick Palm not in the meeting, so KX4Z filled in for him with a description of the ARRL Emcomm Track that will take place the Thursday before the Hamcation/ARRL Convention at Orlando in February 2021. KX4Z has run in to problems in assembling an schedule for the Emcomm Track. KX4Z trying to resolve and come to a conclusion as to what we will do...Rick Palm has been put in charge. Buck stops with him and he now has authority to determine what will be done, and those unhappy with some aspects will have to take what Rick Palm decides. We have not anticipated the many so-far encountered planning difficulties, as other people have different opinions and different experiences. We here in FL are the only people who do large scale training exercises that include a great variety of subjects. This is a "learning process" for us.
5. **TECH NIGHT UPDATE** We did our first of these, for one hour before the ARES net. Eight or nine people participated. Subject matter concerned getting up and running with first HF station, and some considerations (some of them operational preference and just plain emotional

response to particular gear. Asked for and offered to have folks take turns in running a tech night.

6. **FLDIGI HELP OFFER.** Reid talked FLDIGI training. That and NBEMS. FLDIGI is the anchor for NBEMS which allows sending of ICS 213s, radiograms, etc., in a “broadcast” fashion...not as an email to a particular addressee as with WINLINK. Reid offers to help newbies. Digital is fun, and suggests folks get General licenses. Offers to have people come to his house with their computers...jump start in to the digital worlds, without having to watch 15 YouTube videos. Just get in touch with Reid for help; he'd like to start an NBEMS net to get practice with that. He'll teach anyone enough to get going. Reid lives in Melrose. This is 20 miles east of Gainesville. Brett and David Huckstep both said they are interested in taking Reid up on his offer.
7. **PROJECT LEADER UPDATES** Earl McDow started. His IPP project is to inventory County elevations – high places in county. He has discovered a website/document that shows higher places in the county. Building heights with possible antenna heights. We need to expand to towers outside the Gainesville area. EOC portability project...Earl McDow looked today at the EOC in a start to getting an EOC deployable station. Funding for that is a point we need to explore. KX4Z offered some more insight and possibilities with respect to taking current EOC equipment and configuring it in boxes on wheels for immediate as needed detachment and deployment. Brett offered next to talk about typing...which falls in line with the AUXCOM/FEMA issues on resource typing. “Typing” indicates with a lower type number the higher that number's priority. Brett will put together something in FEMA-speak so that typing in their terms is articulated. Badging. Brett can be a point of contact for folks who would like badging. He will mentor folks to do the things needed to be done for badging. KX4Z: he has purchased three smaller solar panels. One of our goals is assisting another club in getting the 100 point solar panel credit. KX4Z will talk to GARS in September about how easy it is to get 100 points of FD credit by operating solar. KX4Z's idea was a Gator box that we could use to mount the gear we already have at the EOC in to the Gator Box and then have it configured so we could literally take it out of the building and deploy when we need to. KX4Z has done a bit of LEO encryption, but hasn't gone beyond. Space weather...he has put a link on our web page on for space weather. Susan Halbert: she is supposed to make a spreadsheet on the local repeater systems...she has information for all the 6 GARS repeaters, and she has contact information for some of the others, such as UF, and private/Fusion repeaters. She is working on that. In Waldo every other Saturday they do training. They built a portable repeater and it sits now on top of a building in Waldo. WB2FKO provided contact information for Jay Garlits AA4FL, who is access/POC for the repeaters on top of the dental tower. KX4Z clarified the circumstances under which we are interested in having the police be able to use amateur repeaters if the trunked systems are out. This comes from our THIRA analysis.
8. **HIGH AND MIDDLE SCHOOL OUTREACH/HAITI GENERAL CLASS UPDATE.** Approximately 6 students for the initial programming class (Arduino), and encouraged them to spend 3\$ for an Arduino. Today was the first of the radio classes...mostly girls interested in STEM showed up! Showed Baofengs and EM waves and frequencies. He had 30/45 minutes. We'll see if more or fewer will show up. KX4Z is teaching a General Class course in Haiti. He has done the first week. Gave test questions with none of the answers, and they did poorly. Next time he did a class they came back, and he worked them through the band charts, etc. Pretty soon the older student was able to answer the questions. In short, KX4Z is teaching three

different technology clubs....hauling equipment is hard work. It is very hard work. He recruits assistants, who with chaperoning can help KX4Z do these classes.

9. **SWIC AND RATPAC TALKS: WHAT THEY NEED FROM VOLUNTEERS.** KX4Z showed a slide on upcoming SWIC talks on RATPAC, and Emergency Management's Expectations and Utilization from Amateur Radio. These are a variety of ZOOM talks that will be done in the coming months, including John Peterson (inventor/chief articulator of AUXCOM) who will do a talk on September 9th. If you are interested in what AUXCOM is all about, this is an interesting approach. FL is nowhere on the list of AUXCOM states and activities. FL has three complicated systems for how amateur operators can be requested and deployed; but it is much more cumbersome than a single approach through AUXCOMM type groups. GA AUXCOM is doing very well, and KX4Z will put some of this on the web site. Open to the public, and a zoom link is on the page that KX4Z will put on the web site.
10. **GENERATOR REPAIR AND NEEDED SPARE PARTS.** KX4Z showed how he has tried to get a generator working...brushes were not the issue, but the voltage regulator replaced immediately made the generator work. Instead of throwing out a generator if it doesn't work, buy a set of brushes that will work, along with a voltage regulator.
11. **ADJOURN** at 8:35 EDT. Many stayed on afterwards to chat in person at the EOC and on the live Zoom feed.