

Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES

May 12, 2021

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

Attendance: 19

Gordon Gibby
Mike Ridlon
Leland Gallup
Craig Fugate
Dean Covey
Brett Wallace
Emily Wallace
Mike kd4inh
Mike WB2FKO
Wendell Wright
Jeff Capehart
Amy KO4IDO
Jim Bledsoe
David Huckstep
Reid Tillery
Susan Halbert
Mike Jaffee
Earl McDow
Vann Chesney

Introductions. From 1830 until 1859 when the meeting commenced.

1. **UPDATES ON BADGING NEW VOLUNTEERS.** Explained that the badging program is our assurance that a volunteer meets all state volunteer legal requirements. Requirements include vetting, background checks. Background checks are necessary for access frequently for deployment to specific locations and in general for deployment outside the County. Home based operators who do not have badges are welcome to provide support from home. The badging process includes some ICS courses and exams. It's a bit of work but is necessary. The NFARC web site includes a link...look for RACES on the website. W4UFL described what the ICS courses 100 200, 700, and 800 are about, as well as the ARRL training. Also described and KX4Z showed the ARES Task Books. Reid Tillery said he wanted to get badged...asked for the pertinent links in an email. KX4Z showed the NFARC website and where the links to badging and task book information could be located. All links shown on screen. Download the main document and all necessary links are in there. Still waiting on an ARRL decision on a replacement for ARES net as to signing up for ARES and logging events.
2. **APPROVAL OF APRIL 2021 MINUTES.** April 2021 minutes approved.

3. **TESTING ALACHUA COUNTY SHELTERS & GO BOXES. (not covered in meeting)**
4. **SANTA FE TECHNICIAN CLASS. (not covered in meeting)**
5. **FIELD DAY 2021.** Kx4Z led off with essential questions: who does what, what needs to be done, where do we set up, etc. Showed notes from FD last year; last year's recommendations include executive summaries for each group; putting our call sign (NF4AC) out on public sites such as ARRL; tents out of sun; training on FD rules (which are in the draft FD plans); bullet pointed checklists; hard copy of planning at site, brochure that doesn't wilt, sidewalk signs, wireless mics; fans in the tents; lighting in the tent; generators; more space for PIO brochures; tents to help people during thunderstorms; coffee and refreshment for visitors; WiFi power lines needing capacitors. Problem with cheap routers; need EOC generator to crank this year; weather watch radio; easier to hit an RMS gateway than having our own itinerant. We've taught FT8, more PSK31 and RTTY are in plan; we have 6m capability...will work on antenna. Better explanation of documents to get bonus points. We are a 2F station under NFL. Showed a FD Executive Summary slide with timelines. Talked about the two HF stations, the antennas, and what they can do. We have a volunteer for satellites. Call sign for the EOC FD collectively is NF4AC. We have a "free VHF transmitter." We can have a PIO or a GOTA station. We can try every mode we want...Showed a slide with timeline by group. W4UFL showed a checkoff list of various things that can be tried for personal growth and "bragging rights." Some of the checklist items are parts of the Task Books and these can be signed off by evaluators. Showed separate bonus point checklists for operations, PIO, etc. Huckstep is IC, Gibby is deputy IC, Gibby is planning and documentations; satellite is Ron Lewis; Earl McDow is logging; Wendell is Logistics with Rosemary as assistant. Walked through the entire 201 and showed all sections, who has volunteered for leadership positions, timeline checklists, bonus point checklists. GARS will also be doing a FD operation. SO there are more than one FD operation going on in the area. There is a FD operations map showing who will be doing FD operations on a map.
6. **INTEGRATED PREPAREDNESS PLANNING (IPP) AND EMERGENCY OPERATION PLAN (EOP). PART ONE: EXPLANATION OF AN EOP.** Brett Wallace KO4JWC presented a slide deck titled "Alachua County ARES Volunteers" Concept of Operations for how we will do our EOP and IPP. First started with a high level overview of the NRF, NIMS, ICS, Direction and Control of Volunteers. Background of ICS derives from the military and from Command and Control issues arising out of the '70s wildfires in CA. After 9/11 the need for a common concept of command and control for disaster response was critical. Went through the National Preparedness Goal, and its phases: planning, Public Information, Operational Coordination, etc...all the way to the Response Phase, which includes Operational Communications. Communications are essential in every single mission. No comms equals mission failure. Our comm services support the entire response. Under the NPG one finds the local, state, region to national (FEMA) integrated planning concept. Horizontal (same level partners) and vertical (county to state to Federal) planning is essential. Means to achieve the NPG is the National Preparedness System. To that end for our group we have assessed the risk, the requirements, and then the building, sustaining, training, and validating of requirements. In the NPS we talk about "core capabilities." We next talk about the National Planning Frameworks (NRF). Every phase has a framework of how things fit together. There is no "this is how you do." 5 guiding principles in NRF. Unity of command is essential to successful volunteer operations as communicators. Brett showed the new "Community Lifelines for Incident Stabilization." We are integral to these lifelines. Next is the National Disaster

Recovery Framework. 8 Guiding principles. Reporting of progress goes through the National Preparedness Report at the national level. We have to do something similar to sustain and engage our efforts. Keeping a campaign of continued preparedness is difficult...but crucial. Communications is frequently an afterthought. Where do we local comms people fit in? We are Region IV FEMA. The Incident Action Plan is the tactical level...it is done at the beginning of an incident. Discussed the relationship between and among strategic, operational and tactical. We have four MEF's (mission essential function). 1: support and assist the Alachua EOC. Go to the EOC and man that with voice and data capabilities. We are backups to conventional comms. If we have an emergency we man the EOC radio room first. We can communicate from EOC to hams at home who can also relay messages: home deployment so to speak. 2: Our volunteers may also have to deploy to shelters and in support of public safety. Law enforcement and fire. EOC may redirect volunteers from place to place...e.g. Need to cover sheriff from fire station, etc. EM decides priority. 3: Man shelters 4: support the joint information center. So our need may be first at fire station, but then hospital, etc. We support as requested by Alachua EOC as part of ESF2. Showed a great slide called "The Gainesville Picture" that illustrated the various parts of the potential support. Jeff Caehart mentioned that Gainesville City has its own EOC, and GRU has its emergency operations. Mentioned five MEFs for scenarios – hurricanes, wildfires, cyber attack, civil unrest, and EMP/CME. Following this was a general discussion of how volunteers have supported comms in the past and what kinds of capabilities they must individually have to provide support at places where there are no antennas. You can participate in both FD activities (GARS and NFARC) if you should so choose.

7. **DRAFT EOP PART TWO – OUR DRAFT EOP FOR GROUP INPUT.** Talked through the five comms disasters and GRUCOMM. Our PS comms are done over a 800 MHz trunking system. GRUCOMM is based on fiber which is redundant but mostly above ground...so vulnerable. All PS is GRUCOMM and can potentially be hacked. Channels and other information are public source. Our skills, assets and strategies were discussed. We could fill with a day's time some of the GRUCOMM function. Linking EOC to state and nearby counties, fire/shelters, etc. Our Ops Plan is a bit fuzzy at this time, because this is not an IAP...we have not been directed to do this. We are volunteers and are not in charge. What we can do is offer support. We have discovered that alerting our people/EOC is an issue. EOC personnel willing to handle EMP proof comms at the EOC, and one of the EM program coordinators is about to get his Technician license. After the ops plan, the next step is the Integrated Preparedness Plan to support the EOP.
8. **DRAFT PART THREE – OUR DRAFT INTEGRATED PREPAREDNESS PLAN.** We have a draft ops plan and now have a draft IPP. Again, the IPP addresses the five MEFs (such as hurricanes). KX4Z showed a draft three year plan for developing and improving capabilities. The 3 year plan is CY 2021, 2022, 2023. Items included badged EM volunteers, shelters, go boxes, HF radios, Solar power capabilities, transportation, typing, HF alerting, repeater surveys, ad-hoc repeaters. May look at building cheap ad hoc repeaters that can be used to support the area. Cached transceivers (a lot of us have many HTs); MARC training, portable EOC comms...so IT can move. Tall places...what are the high places where we can get a line up, or where we can establish elevation for line of site such as SHARES VHF for encrypted local; encryption; what we do in lockout (how to lock out people we don't want on our net); state data comms; resilient homes (where people can go when things go bad); neighborhood hardening. Space WX awareness. What happens with banking after bad comms breakdown? Simplex net plan/test. Sustainability for our membership, and vol family safety, with folks having a plan for what can happen when things go bad. Broadcast? How could we help the broadcast stations?

Our baseline technical things (such as licensing advancement, skills such as voice/data message handling. Rosemary asked about solar flares Jeff Capehart offered to facilitate contact with a contractor who is offering rebates for solar power installations. Amy KO4IDO said she'd talked with solar contractors and the prices were \$50k. She asked about smaller solar systems...KX4Z said come to FD and you'll see solar in operation on a small scale...the small scale that nevertheless can support a small a/c, or refrigerator, which with storage batteries can do something. 1 or 2kw of DC is not that expensive, says KX4Z. KK4INZ discussed how battery systems can support the standard solar installations. You want batteries to have off site power...inverters in both direction, without feeding back in to the grid. Controllers are an EMP vulnerability. Solar panels produce DC and are less problematic.

9. **AMERICAN RED CROSS DRILL.** At least 4 hams from our area participated in the ARC drill. It was easy to do...but KX4Z actually deployed.
10. **NVIS NEWS.** Reid Tillery promoted our local NVIS net...we are exploring how it may be used. First and Third Fridays at 3970 MHz. QRP is welcomed, because we want to see how useful lower power consumption NVIS nets may be used and what utility they may have.
11. **NEWCOMER'S CORNER: POLARITY PROTECTION ADVANCE AND PROJECT.** 15 kits made up by our local volunteers, which we will donate to the EOC for the go boxes. This will prevent our blowing up radios!
12. **ADJOURN** at 8:43 EDT. Many stayed on afterwards to chat on the live Zoom feed.