

**AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JULY 24, 2014  
AT 4:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDINGS  
WERE HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:** Eric Hinson, Chair, District 1  
Brenda Holt, Vice-Chair, District 4  
Doug Croley, District 2  
Gene Morgan, District 3  
Sherrie Taylor, District 5  
Robert Presnell, County Administrator  
David Weiss, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Hinson called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

Mr. Presnell said this was the second Budget Workshop of the year and the overall proposed budget was \$43,520,685 and was an increase over last year of \$567,296 and reflected gas tax that made a turn-around and increased approximately \$100,000, sales tax and some of the other taxes were an additional \$400,000 and there was an increase of approximately \$500,000 in revenue for the first time in several years. He added that included in the budget was moving the Sheriff to a new building; pick-ups for Public Works; one for Code Enforcement; the tractors and mowers to be replaced; the fire truck was added back in with a matching grant; the grant writer position and the animal control position was removed; park improvements to finish the park started last year; contingency was set at \$50,000; new voting machines for Supervisor of Elections; an incinerator for Animal Control and \$250,000 received from the Legislature to upgrade the Extension Building.

Mr. Presnell listed the Capital projects and Commissioner Holt asked what the vehicle was that was listed under the hospital budget. Mr. Presnell explained the truck that Vic drove was in the hospital maintenance budget and it was being bought through that budget.

Commissioner Taylor asked about the \$250,000 and if it was a grant and not expenditure and Mr. Presnell said it had to be shown on both sides, as revenue and expenditure.

Mr. Presnell stated there were still a couple of items that would need to be addressed, such as some of the non-profits they had been funding and others they had been funding and that would be discussed in a minute. He said the budgeted balance was \$296,000 from Cash Reserves and said for them to not let that alarm them, that last year the budget last year utilized \$735,000 and thought they were spending a lot of reserve money and actually the cash balance went up at the end of the year and like last year, they will be turning monies back in this year.

He said with Constitutional Officers that nothing jumped out, there were some requests and with the Supervisor of Elections, it looked like a big jump and it was due to the voting equipment.

Commissioner Holt asked why on some, the recommended amount was greater than the

requested amount, such as the Tax Collector requested \$544,000 and \$557,000 and Mr. Presnell explained it was because the health insurance for the employees and there was some expenses with the Drivers' License that was office related. He further explained they had assumed with the insurance it would be six percent and then the Florida Retirement System rates changed, especially for elected officers and was not received until the middle of June.

**Other Government and Community Organizations**

He said they had discussed Economic Development and the budget currently had \$150,000 for development; Senior Citizens were increased by \$10,000 and the Gadsden County Health Department was doubled to \$100,000. He said the Emergency Housing Repair, from comments at the last meeting, should have made the changes and there was interest to round that out at \$50,000.

Chair Hinson said he would like to see an increase with the Health Department to \$125,000 since they had lost funding the last year.

Commissioner Croley asked if the way the budget was presented if it was currently budget balanced and Mr. Presnell said yes. Commissioner Corley asked if they went upon anything, where the money would come from and Mr. Presnell stated it would come from the cash balance. Commissioner Croley asked if the Cash Balance was over the recommended amount and Mr. Presnell said it was currently \$6.2 Million and he was anticipating turning in approximately \$600,000 from this year's operating budget. He said if they wanted to maintain a \$6 Million reserve, they could spend \$800,000, but if they wanted to leave the \$6.2 Million where it was, they could spend \$600,000 cash balance.

Commissioner Croley asked Mr. Presnell about how much over the amount of revenue that was generated from the amount of roll-up rate of 9.1 was over the present millage rate generated, the estimated amount.

Mr. Presnell stated the figure was \$190,000 that was the reduction and it generated just a tad over that amount because of new construction from the roll-back that came into play.

Chair Hinson said he would like to go up to \$50,000 for emergency housing repairs and go up \$125,000 for the health department.

Commissioner Croley asked if they were at a point to put in additional funding for other items and would like to request funding for Deerwood Circle to be resurfaced.

Commissioner Taylor said she could appreciate Commissioner Croley taking care of his district and asked the possibility of other projects around the district.

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND NOT FOR PROFITS**

Mr. Presnell stated the first three on the list were organizations that had been funded in the past and the budget currently included \$6,500 for Legal Services; \$5,000 for Riparian and \$5,000 for the Gadsden Art Center, which was the same as the previous year. He added that the Boys and Girls Club did not have a recommended figure because it was a seven year contract, which was ending; Redeemed, Inc. and the Organization for Learning/Human Development did not submit the required paperwork according to the Board's policy for Non-Profits. He said the ones at the

bottom were all new requests from groups and said needed direction regarding them also.

Chair Hinson said he was a strong support of Big Bend Hospice and Covenant, but unfortunately with the Health Department, they needed to keep it up and going, but out of the ones he was looking at, felt Quincy Music Theater targeted the youth of the community and connected with the arts, etc. He stated he wanted to get the affordable housing straight, along with the Health Department before discussing the others.

Mr. Presnell stated he had \$125,000 budgeted for the Health Department and \$50,000 for Emergency Housing.

Commissioner Taylor mentioned a Director was needed at the Health Department, currently they had an Interim and they needed someone there full-time and \$25,000 would not pay for one employee and could not do anything significant and was like "putting a bandage on the Mississippi", but what was good was there were other programs coming into help to take on some of the services that the Health Department was losing. But they need someone there to help coordinate the efforts to make sure services were not lost and did not know if putting money there would eradicate what was going on there. She added that she was satisfied with \$100,000 and did not think it needed to be increased, but take a look at it in six months.

Chair Hinson stated the Director for the State contacted him and said they had offered the current person the job and that person turned down the job. He also said if this was approved, they would not receive funds until after October 1<sup>st</sup> and hopefully by then there should be someone in place.

Commissioner Holt stated they had no control over who the Director would be, that was up to the State. She said she would like to add Senior Citizens in Gretna, Mr. Presnell said he checked with the City Manager and there was no group. Commissioner Holt said they did not, but Mrs. Franks did and was over the Senior Citizens group and was a City Commissioner.

Commissioner Holt added that she wanted to set aside \$500,000 seed money as an incentive to draw businesses to the area. She added that the Chamber and Economic Development knew she was not satisfied with both of them and she said at last's year's workshop, she asked specifically for a workshop and have yet to have one.

Chair Hinson asked that the Chair and Executive Director to come forward.

**Lee Garner, Chairman, Gadsden County Development Council and Beth Kirkland, Consultant** appeared before the Board and asked to give their presentation.

Commissioner Holt stated this had nothing to do with the process.

*Commissioner Taylor stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.*

Commissioner Croley said there was a Memo that was dated July 23<sup>rd</sup> that included a list of information regarding economic development and wanted to remind everyone "We are not running a Soviet collective where we've got a five year economic development plan where you go out as the government and order or mandate the creation of plants and other activities as

was done in communist Russia. We have to depend upon the private sector, their interests in expanding their investments for increased production of goods and services. Economic Development can facilitate that, but they cannot go out and hold a shotgun on somebody saying 'You will move to Gadsden County and put a plant in here'. It doesn't work that way."

Commissioner Holt said she liked what Commissioner Croley said because it made "too much sense" because she had to fight like a dog to get people out here because some of the local businesses did not want them out here and some of the local politicians did not want them here and she went to the Courthouse and did research in order to get support for them to continue with it.

Commissioner Croley pointed out that in the case of Piggly-Wiggly, Mr. McDaniel from Jackson County, who also had the store in Donalsonville, GA, wanted to build a store and have a Piggly-Wiggly. He wanted to do that and make the investment. He added that he applauded Commissioner Holt if she assisted him in that endeavor, and Mr. Roy Moore, but the fact remained it was a private business that wanted to put the business in.

*Commissioner Taylor returned at this juncture of the meeting.*

Beth Kirkland appeared before the Board with her presentation. She said she felt there was a bit of miscommunication and saw their desire to sit down. She added that the County's investment of \$100,000 has turned into \$300,000 of match. She added in the future, they would receive a monthly newsletter that would start in early August and they developed a logo and was in the process of designing a billboard going on the interstate donated by Creek Entertainment that would let everyone that Gadsden County was opened for business. She added there were ten projects in the pipeline that ranged from retail to warehouse distribution to manufacturing. She said the Dollar Tree, she believed, was going into the IGA building in Chattahoochee; the Dollar General Manager said he was talking to Corporate Office about putting in a Dollar General Market that had a butcher shop, grocery store, clothing-looking at several opportunities to meet the needs of people in Midway.

Commissioner Hinson said he was sure of the ones on the Board did not want a Dollar General in their community and wanted to keep integrity of Gadsden County.

Dot Inman-Johnson appeared before the Board and said there was no grocery store in Midway, they had no retail opportunities for the residents there and they have been contacting grocery chains, corporate offices and the most well-known corporate grocery market felt they could not get their money back out of what it would take to build a grocery store in Midway and it was brought to her attention the Dollar General Market that was patterned after a Wal-Mart that had the clothing, groceries and all things that Dollar General now had, along with the butcher shop, produce, the whole shebang and there currently was one in Port St. Joe that she planned to visit the next week.

Chair Hinson stated he wanted to keep the integrity of that area up so when they saw things they would feel proud and added that not everyone wanted a Dollar Store, a liquor store or a pawn shop in those areas. He added that he was interested in seeing the Dollar General Market in Port St. Joe and he was open-minded, but he needed to keep the property values up.

Ms. Johnson said as City Manager of Midway, she was as concerned about the integrity of Midway as well and was not looking to put trash there and was why she was taking to time to go to Port St. Joe and see the store for herself.

Commissioner Holt said she appreciated everything they were saying and it sounded like progress.

Mr. Presnell said since they had put the economic development on the County website, the traffic had tripled.

*Commissioner Taylor stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.*

*Commissioner Taylor returned at this juncture of the meeting.*

Ms. Kirkland said that the \$500,000 Commissioner Holt wanted to put into a fund that existed already, the Administrator shared with her the job incentive fund and the job incentive policy and was great to have the policy but if the fund was not funded, they could not use the policy. She added that she and Allara Gutcher were working on three grants, one that was completed and turned in.

Commissioner Croley said Ms. Kirkland had given a good report in the summary and reminded her and the Board that the five largest taxpayers in the county on the real estate side are SuperValu; CSX Railroad; Gretna Racing; Ringpower and Bush/Tri-Eagle Sales and on the tangible equipment side there was Florida Gas Transmission; Talquin Electric; Florida Power, now Duke Power; BASF; the German chemical company and Coastal Lumber.

Commissioner Taylor asked what expenditures were to date and Ms. Kirkland said the balance that was recorded at the meeting was \$61,000 still in fund. Commissioner Taylor asked what the expenditures were to date and Ms. Kirkland said while there was not a lot of hard costs, there was labor costs, administrative costs as well as consulting fees.

Commissioner Holt said she was happy that they had an economic development council, but was looking for a plan. She added there was not a Grant Coordinator and she was going to ask that they "up the money" to go after someone to help work with youth. She added that the Chamber of Commerce was trying to get funding for economic development and the Economic Development Council was trying to get funding for the same and asked why there was a conflict. She thought when the Chamber left last year they were going to work with the Development Council and thought there would be enough money to fund both

Mr. Garner stated the cities and the County was working together and the Chamber had a seat on their Board and was welcome to attend their meetings and work with them.

*Commissioner Holt stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.*

Chair Hinson asked that they contact Gadsden Technical Institute before going to TCC and they could create programs to fit jobs in this area.

*Commissioner Holt returned at this juncture of the meeting.*

Commissioner Taylor said she wanted them to be careful, this was \$150,000 and she wanted jobs but didn't know if this was the right avenue and did not feel comfortable with the way she saw the set-up.

Mr. Presnell said the Boys and Girls Club contract ran out and he needed board direction if they wanted to continue. He also said Redeemed and the Organization of Learning/Human Development did not meet the requirements because they did not submit their financials. He further added that last year the Board passed a policy that required in order to receive non-profit funding, the non-profits were required to submit a cover letter, plan of action, etc. and those two did not.

Commissioner Croley asked what gave the Board the authority to give tax-payer money away to not-for-profits in which they did not have a contract for deliverables.

Mrs. Minnis said that was covered in Florida Statutes 125.01(1)f which authorized the County Commission to provide parks, preserves, playgrounds, recreation areas, libraries, historical commissions and other recreation and cultural facilities and programs and the Attorney General's Office interpreted that to authorize Boards to fund and provide money to not-for-profit groups that they considered to be cultural or helped the community as long as there was a determination that it was a public purpose. She added that since Gadsden was a non-chartered county, they made the determination as to what served as a public purpose.

Commissioner Taylor said there were kindred spirits toward organizations and said there were a couple of non-profits that had requested funding and did not meet the financial requirements and if they moved forward and funded them and make it a requirement that they submit the required documents that was previously asked for before they could receive funding.

Ms. Minnis recommended that not be done because if they decided to not enforce for one group, they had to make sure they were being fair to all groups and suggested they not waive ordinances or policies they have adopted.

Commissioner Holt asked if the organizations listed were the only ones that turned in a request and Mr. Presnell said yes. Commissioner Holt said she was interested in looking at the Boys and Girls Club to discuss with them in looking at the organization for Quincy, Havana and Chattahoochee.

Commissioner Taylor said as was previously stated, there were a lot of programs, a lot of grass-root organizations that were already in effect that were competing for the same group of children. She said she did not mind providing funding for the club only if they were working effectively and if they were hiring people from Gadsden County, but the tradition had been they were not hiring from the county and the participation had ready dwindled.

*Commissioner Taylor stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.*

Commissioner Croley said they should be a good steward of taxpayer's money and ask the organizations if they were going to take tax-payer's money, what they would do with it and be able to verify what they did with it was what they told the Board they would do with it.

Chair Hinson asked that they support the Quincy Music Theater and Commissioner Croley stated he supported that.

Chair Hinson recommended that \$5,000 go to the North Florida Educational Development Corporation and stated they had a huge multi-cultural “thing” going on in Gadsden County, a huge Hispanic program.

*Commissioner Taylor returned at this juncture of the meeting.*

Commissioner Taylor asked that an extra \$10,000 be added to the budget for non-profits so some could come back at a later date and request funding.

Chair Hinson said a project that “was near and dear to my heart” and wanted to add ten additional summer youth jobs for disabled kids

*Commissioner Taylor stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.*

*Commissioner Taylor returned at this juncture of the meeting.*

Mrs. Minnis cautioned them when they start earmarking money for specific groups and included other groups they could run into issues so they had to be very careful how they were trying to do the (summer youth) jobs.

Commissioner Holt suggested if he wanted to increase the money for summer youth jobs, to do that and then they could change things with policy and procedures.

Commissioner Croley asked if (inaudible) was put down and Mr. Presnell stated it was his time and asked if it was his project. Chair Hinson asked if that also included East Lake Yvette this year as well.

Commissioner Taylor stated she would like to ask the Administrator to go back and refund the \$10 Million Bond and they could then look at some serious areas that needed different jobs done.

Commissioner Holt said she was not saying she was not totally in favor of the Jail and Administrative project, but she was interested in going back after the Bond money to see if those projects were going to be done to go after it now, that was what it should be used for and they were still making the same payment they were making every year. She said when they looked at the road situation for District Four she would like to sit down without naming a road tonight and meet with the Director.

Chair Hinson reminded them money was already set aside for the Lake Yvette project, only one side was repaved last year.

Commissioner Croley said they were trying to hit on the safety money to help with the collector roads on the resurfacing and hopefully would see a road situation improvement countywide.

Commissioner Taylor stated she would rather not go into the General Funds to do the roads, she

would like to go after the bond money, but it needed to be done and asked that they look into refinancing the Bond.

Mr. Presnell said only thing left for the Board to make a decision on was the payment on a new administration building. He said there had been talk of TCC wanting the County to take back the Woodham building or they had the option to continue on with the lease they were in. He added that savings of the move would pay for them to borrow the money to build a nice facility for the Sheriff and the savings would make the payment. He added that they had all the costs and needed direction from the Board on what they would like to go.

*Commissioner Taylor stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.*

**Sheriff Morris Young** appeared before the Board and said he needed to know the direction the Board wanted to take with both projects. He asked for clarity from the Administrator regarding the Bond and said if they could increase it by \$7 Million, the payments would not increase.

Mr. Presnell said they could refinance the bond, receive \$7 Million and the payments would not increase.

Sheriff Young wanted to see both projects and did not want to choose one over the other because both were important and asked the Board to make the decision. He said they had done a good job "in cleaning up our community and got to have somewhere for those folks to go" and had violent people running the street and people seemed more concerned with child support.

Commissioner Holt said if it had to be split, she had to look at the jail first because that was where the lawsuits came from.

*Commissioner Taylor returned at this juncture of the meeting.*

Commissioner Holt added that the money (\$400,000) was already set aside for the roof.

Commissioner Croley said he supported the Sheriff's request either the jail or the administrative building but the only way they could consider was could not see them keeping the old building because it was costing too much and the savings alone would probably pay for the Administrative Building and once they heard more about the bond they might could do both.

Sheriff Young suggested having the jail and the courthouse together because right now he had bailiffs at the two courtrooms and asked why not sit with him and the Clerk and put a team together with the Board and have a jail/courthouse and get on the same page and look out for the future.

Commissioner Croley and they were not disagreeing, just was talking about different approaches and suggested they look into refinancing the bond and not take on expense of an old building. He said the present way they were doing things did not make a lot of sense because if they were talking about the kind of money to keep the facility up and still have to put all the additional money into the old building for something that was already obsolete. He added that "one was doable and the other was very possible".



Chair Hinson said his intent early on was to build a new jail and wondered why put locks in when they could build a new jail. He added that in looking back at the history of the building, why get rid of the history, instead build a pod, refurbish the Woodham building and make a state of art facility.

Commissioner Croley pointed out that Chair Hinson spoke as if the County owned the building.

Chair Hinson stated "where I'm coming from I talked with Commissioner Lamb, he called me up and they, TCC going to propose to giving, they are supposed to have been here tonight, I'm surprised they are not here. They gonna give it to the County, right, and with a little stipulation, if we agree to it, they will probably give it to us, whatever. What I'm saying, that's a free building when they give it to us. Now, we've got to pay for it, that's different from what you saying, there's no reason to put a couple Million dollars in that building, pay \$2 Million plus put a couple Million in it. Don't make any sense. But far as refurbishing the building, Sheriff, I would guarantee you the place would be, it would be a stellar sight for you, right? If you go to Tucker Hall, Jones Hall, if you are not impressed, I say, Sheriff I'm wrong."

Sheriff Young stated it was not all about the building, what he was looking at was to have his staff in one place. He added he was trying to look at the future and if they built a new, energy efficient building, he had the staff and it could be "a one stop shop".

Commissioner Holt stated that Honeywell would come in and to an energy evaluation, it's been done before.

Commissioner Croley pointed out they had a responsibility with how to improve efficiency from a business standpoint and to keep an old building that was never built to be a law enforcement center, the only way they would be able to provide the Sheriff with a new building was to get "the albatross" from around their neck and to take responsibility for an old building would just add more burdens to the County, there were no grants for that as far as he knew. He added that he wanted the Board to look objectively at this matter to help Sheriff Young and added there would be savings and they could use that (savings) to build the new pod.

Commissioner Holt asked Commissioner Croley why he favored the Administrative Building over the Pod.

Commissioner Croley said he was not trying to put one before the other, he said they might be able to do both, but he did not like to have the debt over them.

Commissioner Holt asked what caused the lawsuits and wanted to keep them out of trouble first and if they could get the bond and do both, great. She was trying to prevent a problem from the jail being over-crowded.

Chair Hinson said he would like to get an architect to see what would be needed to renovate the building.

**Clyde Collins** appeared before the Board and said an architect and the engineer had looked at the Woodham building and it needed a new roof, and in order to stay in the building the third floor needed to be gutted and completely redone and it would cost \$2.9-\$3.3 Million, \$1.3 for a

new air conditioning, the electrical was outdated, the plumbing was rusted through in areas and if they stayed there, it would need to fully renovate building from top to bottom and would end up spending \$3 Million either at the Woodham Building or for new facility.

Commissioner Holt stated she didn't want to be in a position that the Administrative Building was built first and then get into lawsuits regarding the jail.

Commissioner Taylor asked how much money could be received from the bond and Mr. Presnell responded \$7 Million. She asked if the \$2.5 Million for the Administrative Building and \$3.5 for the pod was a conservative figure and Mr. Collins responded he hoped it was a little high. She added that TCC knew the condition of the building otherwise they would put the investment in it themselves. She added there could be fifty pods built and still never be able to handle the true capacity because last she heard there were 9,000 open warrants and building an additional pod was "putting a bandage on the Mississippi". She asked Mr. Presnell if the bond needed to be designated specific for infrastructure, did it need to be specific for buildings or if there were any restrictions on the dollars.

Mr. Presnell said the first one was specific for roads and thought since they were redoing it, they would be OK.

Commissioner Taylor said once the preliminaries were done, they would be able to get specs.

Chair Hinson said it looked like they were going with the Administration Building and hopefully in the future build the pod, but he wanted it on the record it was his decision to build the pod first.

Presnell said he wanted to make it clear that the current bond is debt is serviced by gas taxes and when the use is changed; it would still come out of the general revenue to the tune of \$750,000 a year.

Commissioner Croley pointed out that was why he was trying to tell them they could commit about a pod until they looked at the bond to see how it worked and said there was no way they could pay for the pod with the savings of moving out of the building if they tried to retain the building at the same time.

Commissioner Holt asked Mr. Presnell if the three years left could be paid out of what was already owed. Mr. Presnell said if it was wrapped around into the new loan and used it for a correctional facility; they would have to pay for it out of the general revenue. He added that they looked at it with \$5.5 - \$6 Million and it was not a bond but was a commercial paper and the payment was approximately \$500,000 annually to do the pod and the administrative building.

Commissioner Taylor asked if any of the Public Works budget was paid out of general revenue and Mr. Presnell stated no.

Chair Hinson asked Mr. Presnell if he could compile all the information that was stated today because at the end of the day on October 1<sup>st</sup> he wanted to try to be building something out there and wanted to have everything together and stated there was \$7 Million in the budget and needed to get a little bold this year and see what the costs were to build both the pod and

administrative building.

Mr. Presnell pointed out that in the current budget, they had already funded \$212,000 because he thought they would proceed with the Administrative Building before the Woodham Building ever came up with TCC and they were looking at spending \$212,000 and the \$200,000 could be taken off the payment.

Sheriff Young asked when the final decision would be made and they responded it would be in September.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE WORKSHOP  
ADJOURNED AT 7:06 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**



**ATTEST:**

**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**BRENDA A. HOLT, CHAIR  
Board of County Commissioners**