

Board of County Commissioners/Gretna City Council
Joint Workshop
MINUTES
May 12, 2016
6:00 p.m.

Present: Brenda A. Holt, Chair, District 4
Eric Hinson, Vice Chair, District 1
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2
Gene Morgan, District 3
Sherrie Taylor, District 5
Robert Presnell, County Administrator
David Weiss, County Attorney
James Payne, Mayor
Anthony Baker, Mayor Pro-Tem
Clarence Jackson, Seat 1
Helen Franks, Seat 2
Jeff McNealy, Seat 3-arrived late
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Holt called the workshop to order at 6:12 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the joint meeting.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no citizens present to be heard.

GENERAL BUSINESS

2. Legislative Priorities

Mr. Presnell welcomed everyone. He said the purpose of the meeting was to discuss legislative priorities for the City of Gretna and Gadsden County as a whole. He said they had a successful year last year and the Senators and the Lobbyist have echoed this is very important and all the municipalities in Gadsden are on the same page. He presented the document from last year. He said the water projects would probably interest City of Gretna most, along with gaming by working with the County if that is your desire.

Commissioner Taylor appeared at this juncture of the meeting.

Chair Holt asked Mayor Payne if he had anything to say.

Mayor Payne said he didn't have any pressing concerns, but he would piggy-back off what was previously said about them coming together, working on the same page. He was in favor of having this type meeting of the minds.

Commissioner Franks interested in infrastructure, roads, water and sewer. She said there was a list of roads that they are needing help with.

Commissioner Jackson said Gretna is expanding annexing property into the City. He said they want new developments, need financial help to run water and sewer.

Mayor Payne said roads and infrastructure important and finding ways to work together with County. He gave accolades to the County for the help on matching the CDBG grant.

Commissioner Jackson said downtown area of Gretna dark at night and hoped to see legislative action to put lights on roads to help beautify and make safer.

Commissioner Franks said another project was old school donated to City would like to make into museum and could use help financially with that.

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie said his comments were commended effort now was doing workshops and hoped to develop a particular week-end with cities and school district to have long development of growth plan to work together to have unified front with legislature.

Commissioner Hinson echoed everything that had been said. He said there was money set aside for infrastructure. He suggested the City of Gretna develop a Main Street. He said the County donated \$5,000 to Quincy & Chattahoochee Main Street.

Chair Holt corrected Commissioner Hinson; she said the money set aside was for economic development, not infrastructure. She voiced she hoped they could look at matching money on City and County side.

Commissioner Franks said they were looking at the old school at one time, they where looking at a building and it could be used for that.

Commissioner Hinson said what he meant regarding infrastructure and if they need help, County could help.

Commissioner Morgan thanked Gretna for hosting the workshop at the Casino. He commended Gretna for working with Greensboro and changing the face of a lot of things. He voiced a lot of needs in Gretna along with other municipalities and will have to prioritize starting with the most important. He said in 2009 they began the initiative for lights at the interchanges, study has been done and will help with growth. He warned all growth was not good growth and they wanted to have smart growth. The need is to make sure you have infrastructure and entice businesses to come, by having a limited tax base, you need to find way to grow without costing citizens.

Commissioner Taylor concurred the importance of this meeting. She said Infrastructure is paramount and a part of putting together a packet with Gretna's other projects, County's projects, along with other municipalities and submit as one to legislature would be beneficial.

Mr. Presnell said perfect example on how it has been working, Taylor has been working with City of Quincy, been working with Midway on roads, utilities, sewer.

Chair Holt said she wanted to make one point clear, not coming to do everything for Gretna or other municipalities because money would run out. Hoping to use their political clout along with County to put things together.

Commissioner Taylor concurred Gretna has made a good faith effort. If they need infrastructure at interchange, let County know, can present unified front to legislature-work together.

Chair Holt said we need grant writer and a person to coordinate.

Mr. Presnell said retreat was held here in February and Board developed goals and this is the beginning of that. The County intends on following through on vision for county. Hopefully they will have economic development project money available at State level for viable project.

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie said he was glad the Administrator brought the strategic plan out. If we begin to have retreat on a weekend with municipalities who have their own items we can push forward with things and we can work on at regional level. He said they are at the beginning of all the meetings and will meet with other municipalities. He said he was happy to hear Commissioner Morgan say he has seen Gretna and Greensboro working together. "The County envelopes all municipalities."

Commissioner Taylor said she heard Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie say something has to be brought forward from tonight's meeting. She said they needed to start dealing with this information in real time to get things done. "We need to keep fire going."

Mayor James Payne said he felt the two managers have worked well together. He said one key thing he would like to work on is an agriculture arena that would attract people to the area. He said the facility could be used to host things for the area and needed projects.

Commissioner Hinson felt it would be good to have GCDC to hear concerns and feel passion. He felt community center or convention center would be better located in Midway because it's close to the airport. He said they are already making it an international airport.

Mayor Payne said their project already has infrastructure, they just need funding.

Chair Holt said can't start or promise anything, until they meet with all municipalities.

Commissioner Jackson made recommendation based on observation. He said BOCC could appoint a Planning Commission to talk with each municipality to develop a blueprint for the direction the county is going.

Chair Holt said now they are only collecting data, that they were elected officials but did not have all of the answers and that Leon County used Blueprint 2000.

Commissioner Franks asked if it was prioritized.

Chair Holt said yes.

Commissioner Morgan said the discussion on the Agriculture Center in Gadsden County started about 5 years ago.

Commissioner McNealy arrived at this juncture.

Commissioner Taylor said there has been a lot said tonight. She felt they all didn't need to go to Tallahassee. She added there was a grant writer and in her opinion one of best and he worked for the Chamber, Rob Nixon, and they needed to utilize him, that it was a matter of using resources by pooling together with municipalities.

Chair Holt said they are simply listening, they must first meet with other cities before they prioritize the final list to be presented to the lobbyist.

Commissioner Taylor left at this juncture.

3. Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) Appointment

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie said the issue with CRPTA has to do with municipality representation on Board. His understanding was Midway was the only city that had representative and at some point they included all municipalities. He said now Midway wants representation along with other municipalities. He said he had not heard from Greensboro or other municipalities. County only has one currently representative. He said he needs help with extra points on votes with projects. Municipalities determine who comes from them-not county-some that have bigger municipalities rotate.

Commissioner Jackson said he was approached about serving. He said letters were submitted to each municipality, but could not go to meeting until recommended. He felt like it would represent County, not Gretna and this was his only concern.

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie said they had nameplates for Jackson, lady from Havana, and other- had four nameplates ready.

Commissioner Jackson asked who made recommendation of who was on board.

Mr. Jefferson said when Commissioner Jackson was asked to serve, they had started a letter writing campaign and his role was 2-fold.

Chair Holt said it was very important this issue be solved.

Commissioner Morgan left at this juncture.

Commissioner Jackson said Tallahassee, Leon County has 76% of vote. He then stepped out at this juncture.

Chair Holt said only thing that concerned her was with annexing and roads.

4. General Business

Commissioner Franks said the City of Gretna's Senior Citizen Program was promised \$10,000 and only received part. She said they really needed the remainder of the funding that was promised last year and had never received it.

Chair Holt said she heard the request and agreed they needed to help the seniors. They filled out paperwork.

Commissioner Franks said they did, but they did not receive whole amount.

Chair Holt said it might be possible to go after other all in one lump sum.

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie said he had to leave, but thought the concern was with the Clerk, who is custodian of the money. He said he recalled there was a question concerning documentation for the supporting money. He said he thought it was not there and the Clerk found a way to pay what could be paid. His understanding was the Clerk did not cut check because Clerk found no public purpose for full amount.

Commissioner Franks said the last meeting she attended; the Clerk did not show up.

Chair Holt said "Counties sue Clerks all the time, nothing new, Clerk not God, and does not walk on water. Kicker is they did everything supposed to do Clerk did not show for meeting. Board sets budget, not Clerk, they need to include in their budget request for this year, funding that makes up difference in unpaid funds."

Mr. Jefferson asked if BOCC would consider additional funding.

Chair Holt responded she was only one commissioner, can't answer, but for them to make request.

Mayor Payne said the time has been well spent.

Commissioner McNealy apologized for arriving late. He said he had just got off road.

Commissioner Franks said she never heard an answer to her question.

Chair Holt said she believed it was discussed.

Commissioner Hinson said as chairman of the Transportation Board they need to utilize services. He said he was petitioning for strong supporters of all areas in district. He believes in working together. He added that at any time he could support efforts, he would love too.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:00 P.M.



ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

SHERRIE TAYLOR, Chair

Board of County Commissioners