

**AT A BUDGET WORKSHOPOF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 23, 2016 AT 4:00 P.M.,
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDINGS WERE HAD, VIZ:**

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
 Nicholas Thomas, Clerk of Court
 Robert Presnell, County Administrator
 David Weiss, County Attorney
 Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

1. Welcome

Chair Holt called the Workshop to order at 4:03 p.m. and asked everyone to please put their phones on vibrate or silent.

Mr. Presnell said they were picking up from the last workshop, there was one request from a Commissioner that was not included at the last workshop that has now been included and they were looking at a \$15 Million budget.

He said the \$280,000 for the TCC roof had been removed; a County marketing line item in the amount of \$40,000 had removed and he said the reason was there was an additional \$40,000 for marketing in the TDC budget and a building inspector position had been eliminated at \$51,000.

He gave a list of the items added:

Fire personnel training	\$ 25,000
Primary Care Services	\$ 50,000
Parks	\$175,000
Grant Matches	\$ 25,000
Midway Seniors	\$ 10,000
Constitutional Officers	\$203,400
Healthcare Coordinator	\$ 96,300

Estimated General Fund Balance

Mr. Presnell said the budget as it was that included all the items did require \$1.1 Million cash from reserves to balance the budget and was not uncommon and they had done that in the past. He added they expected to see relief next year with the increase in property taxes.

He said that the last workshop they were directed to look at a percent across the board cut and had examples of the draw down reserves and the effects on the different departments with different percentages.

Non-Profits

He said Page 7 showed the Non-Profits and there was still a little back and forth and they needed final direction regarding them at this meeting.

Commissioner Taylor asked about the health care coordinator and where it came from and Chair Holt said it came from her and included insurance and she suggested it because they needed someone to stay on top of things.

Commissioner Morgan arrived at this juncture of the meeting.

Commissioner Taylor said she heard what Chair Holt was saying and asking for and asked what the base was on the position. Mr. Presnell said it was calculated at almost \$70,000. She agreed they needed something in place but asked if they needed to do it at this level at this time and said she felt out of sorts approving this position when they did not approve a building inspector and marketing.

Chair Holt said she did not make up the survey nor give the results, but added if they were going to stay on top of things and make sure they went up in the results, they needed someone who knew what was going on.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he felt this was something the County needed because healthy people were employable people and asked with regard to the new position, what was the salary for someone that did this for other Counties of the same size as Gadsden County and did think the starting salary was a little high.

Commissioner Hinson arrived at this juncture of the meeting.

Commissioner Taylor said they did have Max Martinez with the Health Council and now he no longer had the responsibility of the Gadsden County Health Department. She added she knew there was a need so they could coordinate some of the health care issues and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation did indicate that some of their data was antiquated information and possibly could bring the County's ranking up a little higher than where it was.

Chair Holt brought Commissioner Hinson up to speed with regard to the workshop. She said if they intended to get traction, they needed to put someone in charge.

Commissioner Taylor asked if the County was making an effort to collect this information, what other responsibility was expected of the Coordinator. Chair Holt said they would be responsible to help dig the County out of a hole.

Commissioner Viegbesie said there was a conference call that someone should be on now with regards to the Rural Impact County Challenge and it dealt with the rural county poverty rate. He said there were a lot of activities that were health related and believed that was the path they needed to go down but was not in favor of the amount of the salary. Chair Holt said she was looking at \$70,000 salary plus benefits and they could up or down regarding the salary.

Commissioner Morgan said he saw there were different options to balance the budget and he was not in favor of hiring additional staff and had no problem with taking a current position and give them more responsibilities and encouraged the board to look at different options. He again

suggested a 3% across the board cut and moving \$340,000 from Reserves to balance the budget.

Commissioner Hinson said he would like to know why there was a \$1.1 deficient and wanted to know how it got to that point before making a decision.

Mr. Presnell said it was nothing that happened overnight or this budget year. He said the previous year they moved approximately \$2 Million of cash reserves to balance the budget; revenues decreased after the real estate crash of '07 and the County started feeling it in '09, expenses went up and there were cut-backs then, and explained the increase in requests from non-profits more than doubled the past two years and the Summer Youth Program was increased from 25 students to 100; the same with Senior citizen funding increased, Medicaid increased, there was increased funding for parks, a significant investment in economic development, they added ambulance and employee increase costs for medical insurance and retirement. He said it was a combination of things, no one thing the County did with the flat revenues.

Commissioner Hinson said with EMS, that was already in the budget from a few years ago and he was talking about now and wanted to see numbers to help him make a better decision.

Mr. Presnell reminded them at the end of the year they always put cash back in the Cash Reserves and the numbers would change. He said they saved \$371,000 with the changes they made since the budget process began.

Chair Holt said they were trying to nail down what they wanted and she wanted to finish Page 3 so they could move on.

Commissioner Taylor asked about \$203,000 for the Constitutional Officers and asked if it was for cost of insurance and Mr. Presnell said at the last workshop was consensus around the Board to cover increased personnel costs and it included a Server for the Finance Department, everything else was FRS and Health Insurance related.

Commissioner Morgan asked what the Primary Care Services were specifically and Mr. Presnell said it was a project they had been working on with the Health Department and the plan was to match the County and bring in an ARNP to see patients and provide primary health care services.

Chair Holt asked if they were OK with Page 3 and Commissioner Morgan said he was not OK with the page.

Chair Holt said she was making notes: Commissioner Hinson had questions on how they got to the \$1.1; Commissioner Viegbesie was OK with the Health Care Coordinator but wanted to make sure they looked at a reduction in costs and that could be adjusted.

Commissioner Viegbesie said before they left the page, he was concerned with the \$1.1 Cash Fund balance withdrawal. He said he had heard the Administrator say at the last budget workshops, they were decreasing the amount they were drawing on and when you were borrowing less to do more, you were actually getting better and a decrease in the rate at which they drew on it meant their debt was increasing at a decreasing rate and felt it was healthy and felt they were headed in the right direction and hoped next year to withdraw even less. He said he was hopeful as to where they were based on what he knew of where they had come from and was in support of the choice

option of Commissioner Morgan as another way to make this work better.

Chair Holt asked them to look at Effects on Department and looking at the 3% reduction and could not see how they could do a reduction with EMS and Fire. Commissioner Morgan asked if they did not have the money, what would they do. Chair Holt said they would not be there because they had to cover health care and emergency services. Commissioner Morgan said if Revenues were down and they did not have the money, they would have to make other decisions. He asked where she would take from other departments to come up to where they were and she said she had no problem with the budget the way it was now.

Commissioner Morgan said they needed to decide as a Board, they had a certain costs of doing business and it was on the rise; revenues were going down and at some point lines would cross. He said they had to cut spending in order to remain healthy and was the need to maintain a healthy fund balance. He added when the economy started growing again, they could enjoy adding things back in. He said they could look at funding for non-profits and prioritize.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked the Administrator, for assumption purposes, if they adopted the 1% across the board cut it would do less damage to EMS, Fire and how would it impact the present budget as presented. He added they never know what emergencies might happen and if cut, they might not have the resources to respond when needed and felt a 1% cut across the board was the way to go.

Commissioner Taylor asked the Manager if a 1% cut across the board was implemented, would it affect someone's job and he responded he did not think it would under the departments under the Board but he could not speak for the other elected officials.

Chair Holt said she was at 0%; Commissioner Viegbesie possibly 1%; Commissioner Morgan at 3%; Commissioner Hinson at 0% and Chair Holt did not think \$1.1 Million was too much to draw down and they would still be over what was required by the State.

Commissioner Hinson thought \$700,000 for economic development was already in the budget and asked how it worked. Mr. Presnell said it was for two years but they passed a new policy to provide incentives for expanding or new businesses and \$700,000 was in general budget and there was no reason to budget this year.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was leaning toward no cuts but if there must be one, 1% was the healthiest option.

Commissioner Hinson said if they kept it like was, they still had \$5 Million and the County was in a great fiscal position currently.

Commissioner Taylor said if they looked at it this way-last year had they \$6.1 Million in reserve and this year they had \$5 Million in reserve and if they continued to trend, next year they would have somewhere between \$4-5 Million and the following year there would be a decrease. She said they did not want to continue borrowing money to fund the budget. She said they must agree to disagree, things were added and she was not in support of the Health Care Coordinator position currently and would like to see the Building Inspector position added back.

Chair Holt asked where she was at cutting percentages and she said she was not cutting across board right now, she did not agree with that.

Commissioner Hinson felt they needed to add a position for a mosquito sprayer. Mr. Presnell said they just received \$5,000 additional State dollars per month and they have the truck and can use funds to pay public work personnel additional salary for overtime to use truck. Commissioner Morgan said some municipalities have their own truck.

Commissioner Viegbesie wanted to visit the non-profits.

Mr. Presnell pointed out this was not a workshop, but a special meeting and was advertised as such. Commissioner Taylor pointed out the flyer said workshop.

Chair Holt said for the Departments, she had 4 at 0% and Commissioner Morgan at 3% cut for the departments.

Commissioner Viegbesie said if they kept non-profits as they had last year they were looking at \$286,500. Mr. Presnell said in the right-hand column they incorporated some of the comments from the previous meeting. He said they eliminated Greensboro and Gretna Main Street but if they fund the capital request of Art Center, the figures go back up.

Commissioner Hinson said before they go to the Art Center, they needed to look at the Havana Community Development, they had been partnering with the communities, and needed to go with that and move \$25,000 to Havana Community Development. Commissioner Viegbesie said he was in support of that and with them having \$25,000 to work with, suggested \$10,000 of the \$45,500 requested. Commissioner Viegbesie said Rotary asked for \$10,000 and he suggested \$5,000; We Care asked for \$27,000 and suggested \$5,500.

Chair Holt suggested leaving the Art Center at \$5,000 and split \$25,000 among the health care.

Commissioner Hinson said he understood what was being said, but when they see someone that was growing in the community and partnering with the community and understood the Boys and Girls Club was different. He added they needed to help the ones out that were trying to enhance the neighborhoods.

Commissioner Viegbesie suggested they split the \$25,000 between the Art Center capital (\$10,000) and Havana Community Development (\$15,000).

Commissioner Taylor said she was in support of We Care and they helped quite a few in the County.

Commissioner Hinson asked what if they gave Havana Community Development \$12.5; the Art Center \$10,000 & We Care \$2,500.

Commissioner Morgan said he was not sure if he was following the conversation and asked if they were saying not to fund the Art Center Capital and thought they committed to them earlier in the year that they agreed to fund it.

Chair Holt said she felt they saw what We Care had done and the need for a Health Care Coordinator and thought they needed to start rotating organizations off the list.

Commissioner Taylor asked if the Health Care Position could be reduced maybe to \$40,000-50,000 and then split the money to the other three organizations. She also said the rule was if they did not apply they could not fund. Chair Holt said there had never been a rule, Mr. Presnell said there was a policy adopted that if they did not apply, they were not funded. Commissioner Taylor said Chair Holt was looking at bringing in a \$100,000 position when they were cutting in other crucial areas, i.e., economic development and marketing.

Commissioner Hinson said they only needed three votes and suggested they go \$10, \$10 and \$5 and review this again in three to five months.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if he was saying if they distribute the \$25,000, advertise the position for the Health Care Coordinator at a lower rate and they found someone at a cheaper rate, the left-over money could be brought back to distribute to the non-profits.

Commissioner Hinson said he had not thought too much about it.

Chair Holt said for him to do what he wanted on the \$25,000 and she wanted to keep enough money to get someone for the Health Care Coordinator.

Mr. Presnell clarified it would be \$5,000 for We care; \$10,000 for the Art Center & \$10,000 for Havana Community Development and they said yes.

Commissioner Taylor said in the event they advertise the position at a lower rate and they got a certified person at the lower rate, the balance could go to the non-profits.

Commissioner Hinson said his position was he wanted to see first if they were duplicating the position. Chair Holt said that person would report to the Board, not the State.

Commissioner Hinson said it was a great idea but he wanted to talk with the Health Department to ensure they did not duplicate.

Chair Holt said if they did nothing, the health care would not improve and who would want to bring business here with the health ranking being 67 out of 67 counties.

Commissioner Hinson said he wanted to have a workshop before a meeting because he never heard about this until this meeting and would like to be able to ask questions before a meeting.

Mr. Presnell said one option was to advertise and pull the trigger later.

Commissioner Viegbesie said they were going round and round; if the money was allocated it did not mean it had to be utilized; they had money never used in the year and the position could be created when approved and be brought back to determine the job description and position.

Mr. Weiss said he did not want to give the public the impression it was a County run program and did not want to create potential liability.

Chair Holt asked if they were going to look at the \$25,000.

Commissioner Viegbesie said they came to a consensus of \$10 for the Art Center, \$10 for Havana Community Development, and \$5 for We care.

2. Overview and Other Budget Issues

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Holt asked if there were any public comments and there were none.

3. Summary

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:47 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

**SHERRIE TAYLOR, Chair
Board of County Commissioners**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk