

**AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MAY 25, 2017 AT 4:00 P.M., THE
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: **Sherrie Taylor, Chair, District 5**
 Eric Hinson, Vice Chair, District 1-Arrived late
 Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, District 2-Arrived late
 Gene Morgan, District 3-Arrived late
 Brenda Holt, District 4
 Robert Presnell, County Administrator
 David Weiss, County Attorney
 Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

1. WELCOME

Chair Taylor called the workshop to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the Workshop.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED 17/18 BUDGET

Mr. Presnell said this was the first Budget workshop of the year. He said the proposed budgets from the Constitutionals were not required until June 1st. He said today they would give them an overview of their Departmental budgets.

Commissioner Hinson appeared at this juncture of the meeting.

Commissioner Morgan appeared at this juncture of the meeting.

He said this year the fund balance was at \$6.1 Million currently and had \$800,000 going back into the fund.

He said on the Expenditure side, the Departments have been very conservative.

Commissioner Morgan said he mentioned \$800,000 going back into Cash; Mr. Presnell said part of that money was insurance proceeds from the (Stevens School) fire; \$200,000 was appropriated for Parks that was unspent and some unspent money from Departments that would go back into the Cash balance.

Mr. Presnell said there was a decrease by \$271,500 to get to the numbers they had before them; the Non-Profits had not been addressed; the Main Streets, Seniors and Summer Youth was still in, but the \$271,000 was not in until they addressed that. He added that Havana Main Street was getting incorporated and would be increasing that funding by \$5,000. He reminded them that Medicaid was a State formula, would be increasing but would do better than the anticipated increase. He said they included payment for the new radio communication System for Law Enforcement. He said they would see a \$40,000 decrease to the Development Council and \$20,000 decrease to the Chamber and that was what it took to get to a balanced budget they wanted to be at.

Commissioner Holt asked if there was a projection on Medicaid and Mr. Presnell said the chart showed an increase after 10 years and the current projected increase would be \$80,000 instead \$100,000.

Commissioner Hinson asked it be explained to him in case he had to give an interview to WCTV so he could articulate that.

Commissioner Viegbesie arrived at this juncture of the meeting.

Mr. Presnell explained each County was required by the State Legislation for Medicaid funding statewide, the State funded a majority of it but each County was required (Local County Effort) a more substantial contribution from each County. He said ours was \$1 Million but some Counties were \$40 Million. He said it was reduced but the State made a 10 year chart to show what each County would be paying for the next decade with the increases. He said there was a decrease this year from \$100,000 to \$80,000.

Commissioner Holt said that was not a lobbyist issue, it would need to be State-wide. She said on the Medicaid issue, if they were not able to get the County's portion decreased, they may need to get help from small counties. She said also, if a Medicaid patient was placed in the hospital in another County, Medicaid dollars go to that County.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he hoped they understood that Medicaid was a federal grant program and this was a projected amount.

Chair Taylor said they did know the State was in constant correlation with the Federal Government and if a letter was sent telling them what they were being assessed, the State should know. She said they had a very comfortable reserve and if they needed to take care of some things, they were ok.

Mr. Presnell said the Medicaid figure would not change for the next 12 months, it was locked in.

NON-PROFITS

Chair Taylor said they needed to look at them Non-Profits one by one.

Mr. Presnell asked if they would like Staff to look at them and bring it back to the Board or have the Non-Profits come to the next workshop and present.

Commissioner Hinson stated they had mentioned a three year cycle and after that a Non-Profit should be self-sustaining.

Commissioner Holt said whether she liked them or not, she saw the need for North Florida Legal Services and was in favor of funding the Boys and Girls Club.

Chair Taylor said she would like to look at the Non-Profits, have them come do a presentation and remembered them discussing the three year rule and wanted to look at that. She also said she was afraid it would affect the Boys and Girls Club if they put that rule in place.

Commissioner Hinson said brought up when he was with the School Board, Boys and Girls Club was

more effective between 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. instead of during the school hours.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if there was anywhere on the worksheet for amounts proposed for the NPOs and was told no. Mr. Presnell said they did not have to decide on the funding for the NPOs tonight and had heard what he needed to know to move forward with the budget. Commissioner Viegbesie said he would like to see the creation of a Health Care Coordinator.

Commissioner Morgan asked when the most recent revenue projection would be out and Mr. Presnell said the middle of June. Commissioner Morgan asked where they were trending revenue-wise and said he had no problem in re-prioritizing if they wanted to look at different things but their revenues were flattening or declining and they had to be careful of the over-all size of the budget.

Mr. Presnell said at this point they had a balanced budget but were facing challenges and when they get the revenue projections in June, and hoped the property taxes would start going in the right direction. He added they would have to be careful or will have to use cash to balance the budget and was the reason for the workshops. Commissioner Morgan felt it might be useful if Boys and Girls Club, School Board and Mr. Presnell could sit together and have discussions.

Economic Development

Commissioner Holt said she did not see cutting GCDC the \$40,000 but did have a problem with funding Business Retention because West End Grille and the Fish House just closed so retention has not performed. She said she and Antonio Jefferson just left Mississippi where there has been an expansion of economic development. She added they should run water and sewer to the interchanges and get them site ready.

Commissioner Morgan stepped out at this juncture of meeting.

Commissioner Morgan returned at this juncture.

Chair Holt said she could not see paying someone to retain businesses, the businesses were closing and no-one reported it to the Board.

Commissioner Hinson said according to what Commissioner Holt had said in previous meetings, Commissioner Holt said she was responsible for bringing Four Star Freightliner to the County and if that was the case, she was the one that made the mission move to bring them here. He said the Board did not hire an Executive Director, they hired a Consultant.

Mr. Presnell clarified that \$40,000 for the current year funded to the GCDC was specified for Small Business and there was also \$40,000 to the Chamber.

Commissioner Holt said as for the first thing that was not true; when Four Star Freightliner came, all of them were in the same meeting. She said Economic Development should not be cut, but be increased. She also said someone had to be the headhunter. She further said the Board was focusing on the people when they should be focusing on the economic development.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked the Administrator if GCDC used all the money that was budgeted for this fiscal year and he said they had not as of yet but were on track to use all the funds. He said GCDC was the one that did groundwork and has a function in Gadsden County's economic

development. He said if they felt they were not working it effectively and efficiently, they needed to look at that and not the endeavor and the mission they had in the components.

Commissioner Hinson said everyone knew that Commissioner Holt was a go-getter and he was trying to say he had no problem with GCDC and they could increase it.

Commissioner Morgan said they needed to focus on the primary reason they were here today and that was to take an initial look at the proposed budget for the next fiscal year and set general priorities. He said he stepped out of the room a little while ago from a Budget Workshop and stepped back into what sounded like an Economic Development Meeting and felt they needed to focus on the Budget Workshop today.

Commissioner Holt said he had a point but how they budgeted their money would determine if they wanted to bring in Economic Development or not and she felt they needed to set aside a substantial amount of money for economic development.

Chair Taylor said she concurred with Commissioner Morgan but knew they needed to give the Manager direction and it was obvious there was a need for more discussion regarding this.

Chair Taylor said before going forward, they needed to determine the best avenue to get jobs here. She recommended at the next workshop they allow an hour or so to talk only about economic development. She asked Mr. Presnell to set up an economic development workshop while they were working on developing the budget.

Commissioner Holt left the meeting at this juncture.

Mr. Presnell said he needed to mention a decrease by over \$1 Million balance because of Road Bond money being spent on paving projects. He said the Constitutional Officers' budgets were not due to them until June 1st and they plugged in the numbers for the current year. He said the Summer Youth Program was in at the same level as well as the Senior Citizens.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought the Summer Youth employment program was \$125,000 not \$120,000. Then he said it was 125 jobs. Mr. Presnell said \$120,000 was what was budgeted but they would clarify that.

Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.

EMS

Mr. Presnell said they were hoping for some direction regarding the EMS fund and they all knew the concerns they had and how they have had to put more cash in each year to make up the difference due to a number of reasons and they wanted to give an overview of that. He said if they fixed this, it would free up revenues for other programs, some they had discussed tonight.

Commissioner Morgan asked if other rural counties were facing the same issues and how they were addressing them. Mr. Presnell said they were having to put funds in each year and was currently at \$982,000 and will be over \$1 Million the next year because of the Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement rates plus increased costs. He said the revenues were staying "flat", with the number of calls they were taking, the revenues should be increasing but with the declining amounts

of reimbursement was part of the problem. He pointed out the employee expenses and said a truck had been added. He also pointed out in 2014-2015, the State increased the High Risk retirement rates and all EMS employees were high risk retirement like Law Enforcement and it was a big bump they had to absorb then. Mr. Presnell said each employee had to get overtime because of the 24 hour shifts and they were required to pay them over the 80 hours.

Commissioner Hinson felt they needed to have a workshop regarding EMS as well and he was about to go to the FAC Conference and said maybe he could ask other Commissioners from other Counties what they do to help them know how to move forward.

Chair Taylor said maybe they could add the Non-Profits on that workshop as well.

Chair Taylor said when she met with the auditors, they said the Board was using projecting revenues in the budget and using those projected revenues to balance the budget and she said they should have never done that and history has shown it is not corrected on that level. Mr. Presnell said they were aware of that. She asked why not use General Revenue to balance it as opposed to anticipated revenues. He said that was what they were going to do in the future.

Commissioner Viegbesie returned at this juncture of the meeting.

Chair Taylor said Commissioner Morgan brought up the overtime with EMS and Mr. Presnell said it was there because of the low pay. She said it looked like to her if they gave a decent salary and let them have shift work where they worked 24 hours and then they worked whatever they needed to work to get 16 more and then they would be off. Mr. Presnell said that was not how it worked. Chair Taylor said it was his job to figure out how it could work to get out of the debt. Mr. Presnell said he had proposed them working 8 or 12 hour shifts to get the Paramedic and EMT down to 40 hours a week but the EMS Director said they would not be able to hire any Paramedics because 80% of their Paramedics work two shifts here and then go to Tallahassee, Blountstown or Liberty, somewhere and work another shift.

Roy Pippen, EMS Director, appeared before the Board. Chair Taylor asked him how long he had been with EMS and he said he took over as Director in April 2015. She asked what he proposed they do and he said he and the County Administrator had discussed it and it was one of their proposals and was on Page 11 of the Agenda. Chair Taylor asked that he explain it for the sake of citizens in the audience that did not have a sheet. Mr. Pippen said Jeff Price could probably explain things better.

Jeff Price, Budget Analyst, explained they would take the Small County Surtax that was currently split between Fire/Rescue and Public Works and redo the Ordinance so it would be split between Fire/Rescue and EMS. He said at the same time they would impose a 5 cent fuel tax on the Local Option Gas Tax and a nine cent motor fuel tax, which would generate approximately \$1.4 Million and would replace the money that Public Works was getting initially from the Small County Tax.

Commissioner Morgan said if the trend kept going in the same direction as it had over the past five years and five years from now they had \$2 Million that they would have to fund and only had \$1 Million extra coming in from the 5c tax they imposed 5 years ago. He said he did not think it was a funding issue; it was an over-all model issue of how they were doing things and felt that was what they needed to address. He said there never would be enough money, they needed to prioritize

what they wanted to do based on the revenues they had coming in, the challenges they had and this particular issue of not collecting for the services. He asked what they would do if they did not have the money to fund the program with and had no options.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked the Administrator if they saved money with redoing of the contract with CRMC. Mr. Presnell responded it was \$175,000 but it did not heal anything. Commissioner Viegbesie asked how strict were they with allowing overtime or if there was any strict criteria as to who gets and how much. Mr. Presnell said he had directed Mr. Pippen to hire more part-time employees because they work one shift that would keep them under the 40 hour week and they would get no overtime and would save money on benefits as well.

Commissioner Hinson said this was one of the positions that they did not need to water down, he said personally he did not want a part-time person working for him, he wanted someone committed and who wanted to be there. He said they needed to look in-house first and get the best of the best.

Commissioner Morgan asked what Decatur County was doing. Mr. Pippen said a private organization from Atlanta took over.

3. COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Viegbesie said he had nothing to say.

Commissioner Morgan said he appreciated the information and was sure they would put together a sensible budget.

Commissioner Hinson thanked Commissioner Viegbesie, Commissioner Morgan and Chair Taylor for their input.

Commissioner Morgan left the meeting at this juncture of the meeting.

Commissioner Hinson said they had over \$7 Million in General Funds and to him that was impeccable. He asked how much over-time there was for each department for the last five years.

He said he was asked at the last meeting about refinancing of loans. He said in 2013 they refinanced the Hospital loan and the interest rate went from 503 to 295 a savings of \$1.9 Million dollars; 2014 they did the Gas Tax and Road Paving program and went from 4.5% to 1.44% and saved \$366,000 and got money for paving. He said in 2016 they did the Library loan and was down to 1 ½ % interest rate and saved \$573,000 and in total was \$2.8 Million in refinancing the loans and there was nothing left to refinance.

He said this was a great meeting and got the information needed to move forward. He said July 1st all final property values would be due, July 11th they would receive their books; July 13th would be the second budget workshop

Commissioner Viegbesie said he specifically mentioned creating a health care coordinator position and would like it included in the workshop.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
May 25, 2017-Budget Workshop

Chair Taylor asked if there were any citizens that wished to speak and there was no-one.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR TAYLOR DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 6:17 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA



ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk

BRENDA HOLT, Chair