

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON APRIL 21, 2020 AT 6:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Chair, District 2
Brenda Holt, Vice Chair, District 4
Eric Hinson, District 1
Gene Morgan, District 3
Sherrie Taylor, District 5
Wesley Hall, Interim County Administrator
Nicholas Thomas, Clerk of Court
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Viegbesie called the meeting to Order at 6:04 p.m. and explained under the emergency situation, they were handling the meeting under a different approach.

He asked everyone to bow their heads and the Invocation was given by Rev. Jeffery Jackson, First Baptist Church, Quincy, FL. The Chair then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

At this time, Commissioner Taylor attempted to phone in by calling the Deputy Clerk’s cell phone, the call was missed and the call was returned to her. She stated the log-in to ZOOM was not working for her and she was on her way in.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Hall said the next item was Amendments and Approval of the Agenda and he would like to add Item 10a Appointment to the Governor’s “Re-Open Florida Task Force”.

Commissioner Taylor appeared at 6:17 p.m.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED AND COMMISSIONER MORGAN MADE THE SECOND. A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN.

COMMISSIONER HINSON	YES
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	YES
COMMISSIONER HOLT	YES
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	YES
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	YES

THE AGENDA WAS APPROVED WITH A 5-0 VOTE.

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES

There were none.

CONSENT

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AND COMMISSIONER MORGAN MADE THE SECOND. A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN.

COMMISSIONER HINSON	YES
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	YES
COMMISSIONER HOLT	YES
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	YES
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	YES

BOARD APPROVED THE CONSENT AGENDA 5-0

1. Ratification Memo
2. CR 161 Point Milligan Road-Design Services Bid Award
3. CR 161 Point Milligan Road-Design Services Task Order
4. Pat Thomas Pier-Bid Award
5. CR 65 Attapulugus Highway Design Service-Bid Award
6. CR 65 Attapulugus Highway-Design Service Task Order
7. Cooks Landing Road SCOP-Bid Award
8. Tolar White Road SCOP-Bid Award

8a.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Hall said the next item was Approval of the Minutes.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE AND THE SECOND WAS MADE BY CHAIR VIEGBESIE. A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN.

COMMISSIONER HINSON	YES
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	YES
COMMISSIONER HOLT	YES
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	YES
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	YES

MOTION PASSED 5-0

9.
 - a. January 7, 2020-Regular Meeting
 - b. November 19, 2019-Building Department Workshop
 - c. December 3, 2019-Legal Applicants Interview of BOCC

ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Viegbesie said due to Corona Virus COVID19 and the efforts of BOCC to continue practice of social distancing, Commissioners still want to continue to hear from citizens under Citizens Requesting to be Heard Section on the Agenda and ask they email to the County at CitizenstobeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov and they wish to thank everyone for patience and flexibility during this time of uncertainty.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

GENERAL BUSINESS

10. Appointments to the Tourist Development Council

Mr. Hall introduced the above item and said it sought to appoint one citizen to serve a four-year term on the Tourist Development Council. He further stated this item was before the Board at the June 18, 2019 Board meeting and the Board tabled this item and the TDC was requesting to move forward with the appointment of John Garcia to one of the vacant Bed Tax positions.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER MORGAN MADE THE SECOND. A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN.

COMMISSIONER HINSON	YES
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	YES
COMMISSIONER HOLT	YES
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	YES
CHAIR VVIEGBESIE	YES

MOTION PASSED 5-0

10a. Appointment to the Governor’s “Re-open Florida Task Force”

Mr. Hall introduced the above item and stated it was for Board approval to select Commissioner Gene Morgan as the Representative from Gadsden County to serve on the Re-Open Florida Task Force. He stated Florida Governor Ron DeSantis appointed nearly two dozen lawmakers and business leaders to form a task force to work on re-opening the state’s economy. This task force would create a short, medium and long-term recommendations for reopening the state after weeks of shutdown due to the coronavirus outbreak. There will also be subcommittees that would report to the executive committee. He added there was no fiscal impact.

Chair Viegbesie said before they discuss, he gave a background as to how this came to be and said he had a Speaker Form that was requested be read into record. He added this was not a done deal and was contingent upon the Governor’s approval. He added when the motion is made, the contingency should be added. He said he was having a conversation with Staff at the Governor’s office and conversation came up with regards to the opening of Florida and the Governor forming a task force and the Chair said he wanted Gadsden County to be at the table, at least on one of the committees or subcommittee or on the task force itself. In conversation it was asked who and he mentioned Commissioner Morgan.

He then said he had a Speaker Request Form from Sam Palmer, President of Gadsden County NAACP and Chair V read following statement into record.

- “On behalf of the NAACP, we oppose the appointment of Commissioner Morgan to the Task Force;
- Not political;
- Not personal;
- Want the safety, health and welfare of the citizens to be the primary concern;
- His comments that he agrees with the Administrator of Florida State Hospital of their action;
- His claim that misinformation was being put out which was false;
- Recommend that the Board select someone that best represent our values;
- We realize that the final decision will be Governor DeSantis.”

Chair Viegbesie said that was Mr. Palmer’s comment of opposition of appointment that he read into record.

Commissioner Morgan said he appreciated the opportunity to be nominated to that Committee but based on information he just read there was obviously those that were not comfortable with his appointment; he withdrew his name from consideration.

Commissioner Holt nominated Dr. Viegbesie. Chair Viegbesie thanked her for her vote of confidence but felt he “had too many pots and not enough burners to put them on”.

Commissioner Taylor said in light of comments that have been made, felt they got the cart before horse and asked where they were? She said there had been no dialogue about it. Is representation there to uphold Reopen Florida? Would they be representing the Board and the County? Chair Viegbesie said this was not the conversation he was there to converse on, but felt Gadsden County needed to have representation there and was why he was bringing this before Board and that was the name that came to him for appointment. Commissioner Taylor said her comment was not to approve, but more of what would they have power to do; they need to go with voice of what Board and County want them to say.

Chair Viegbesie said there were three options, to approve him, not approve; or direction of the Board and that meant if the Board wanted to approve someone from the community, that was the direction of the Board. Now it was in the hands of this Board.

Commissioner Holt said the Governor appointed to lot of Boards throughout the State. She said Florida was going to open sooner or later and it was better to be at the table than on the table. This board has an opportunity to get with that person, whoever that individual was, and give them ideas and suggestions either through the Manager or at a meeting, but this committee would take place and it would be better to have representation there. She said if they were fortunate enough to be selected, then that means they would have input and they definitely need a person on there.

COMMISSIONER HOLT NOMINATED COMMISSIONER HINSON. COMMISSIONER TAYLOR SAID THEY SHOULD DISCUSS AND VET THIS TOGETHER. MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF SECOND.

Commissioner Morgan said they may be premature in what they were trying to accomplish, maybe they should table this item.

COMMISSIONER MORGAN MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN.

COMMISSIONER HINSON	YES
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	YES
COMMISSIONER HOLT	YES
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	YES
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	YES

MOTION TO TABLE PASSED 5-0

CLERK OF COURT

11. Updates

Mr. Thomas stated he had nothing to report.

Commissioner Taylor asked about his email concerning raises, when were they given. Mr. Thomas said his office received notice of them on Friday and he forwarded that to them for their information.

Commissioner Holt asked the Manager if the security people were being paid to the end of the meeting or when everyone had left the building and they were able to lock up and leave. Mr. Hall stated they were being paid to the end of the meeting plus 30 minutes to clear the building. Commissioner Holt said she was told there was problems with them being paid.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

12. Updates

Mr. Hall thanked each Board member for the opportunity to serve, it was a humbling and rewarding opportunity to serve and thanked Staff for their support. He gave a humble thank you and said it had been a wonderful experience.

Chair Viegbesie commended him for his dedication and service to the people of the County. He wished him success in all he does.

Commissioner Taylor said she liked him a long time ago. With regard to the raises; two were elevated to new permanent positions. She had a fiscal question, being she was responsible for the fiscal status of the County. She said "know a couple of them must have received at least 3-4 raises within the last year and half. At the beginning of this fiscal year, we all cried that there were constraints in place and that we needed to honor those constraints and obviously when you have constraints in place, you don't do raises. People begin to multi-task and get the job

done until we can get to a level because there were a number of programs that was cut under the premises that there were budget constraints. Because we've given out, my God, over a \$1 Million in raises from my understanding. So, your position on that, there were at least 20 people, 15-20 people that received raises?"

Mr. Hall asked from him, over \$1 Million?

Commissioner Taylor said "No, no, no, not from you, No Sir. I'm saying maybe, probably over the last 2 ½ - 3 years that money has gone through our coffers. You may attest. I think that number came out, but it was pretty close because it was some significant raises given during certain period. Were we losing people, were we giving double work, the one I want to hear, did we get a, what is it, a landfall, or, what is that thing called?"

Chair Viegbesie said a windfall.

Commissioner Taylor said "A windfall, where there was ample money came in so we could do some other things, I mean...I'm trying to figure this out. I hope I haven't put you on the spot."

Mr. Hall said they had a very prudent year, cut back on a lot of spending and a lot of people did a lot of jobs, doubled up on jobs and many of those people that had raises and felt it would boost morale. He said he always felt if you appreciated the job someone did, show it. He felt fiscally, they were in a much better position than they were a year ago and he took the opportunity to simply reward some people for a job well done. She said she could appreciate that and would not go any further and hoped they could continue to support the budget. She then asked if they were close to getting the bridges fixed that the Governor gave them funding for and he said yes, they should be starting construction in next few weeks. She asked about Stevens School. Mr. Hall said he had talked with Mr. Meeks and it was a priority for him; they have set a target for June but has been moved because of certain things that have gone on-hopefully by the Fall. They have the kitchen to do, the ceiling and floor. Chair Viegbesie said at the last meeting, he delivered the check to the Clerk from the Governor for the bridges.

Clerk Thomas appeared before the Board and said the check was for \$2.2 Million and was deposited, when they awarded the contract for Hutchinson Ferry, it was for \$1.6 Million and he has not seen costs estimates for Little River and assumed it would be just as much. He added he knew they expected money back for the paving and wanted to caution them until they knew what the costs were, if money for Little River runs more, there may be no money to give back. Mr. Hall said Little River should run much less; it should run somewhere around \$600,000-\$800,000. He added the issue with Hutchinson Ferry was with piling where the water ran through. The Clerk restated he had not seen figures for Little River and wanted to make sure that was covered.

Chair Viegbesie asked the Administrator to share with everyone the collaboration with the municipalities with regard to the masks.

Mr. Hall said regarding masks, he got with Captain Collins and found where they could order at a cost of approximately \$1.25 per mask and they were ordering several thousand and the cost would be \$5900.00. He said an email was sent to each of the municipalities to inquire the

number they would like and an order will be placed tomorrow and Captain Collins will get the target date of when they could expect them.

Chair Viegbesie said the amount of money that was mentioned was not all from the County, each municipality has contributed to that total and was a collaborative effort.

Commissioner Taylor said when they came up with the rule regarding masks when entering the stores; how do they implement that other than saying it in their meetings. Do they meet with law enforcement, send a courtesy letter to vendors or let it go the way it's going? She walked in one store and saw where a deputy wasn't wearing a mask and was concerned and said to the individual it was a mandate from the Board and he went into the biblical sense of I, God has the last word and why He put a brain between our ears so we choose right from wrong. She said she heard from the Health Coordinator, Dr. Cooksey, indicate that supplies and equipment would be far and few between because the County being a rural area and we may be on lower end of receiving. If we don't curb this virus, we aren't going to have equipment for it either so her question was, what were we doing as a Board, with regard to law enforcement agencies, to get the message to the vendor, friendly and not forceful, to enforce this.

Mr. Hall said he was getting a conference call together with all the municipalities and will see the best approach to make sure it was enforced without embarrassing or causing undue hardship.

Commissioner Holt said she was glad they were having this discussion. In the early 2000's the Board set up the Health Council. Dr. Cooksey and other health care providers are on the council. This was things that needs to get to them.

Chair Viegbesie gave an update-CRMC is a for-profit hospital that the County has a contract with. He said he was made to understand they will not test anyone unless that person was admitted. He got in touch with Alan Keese at CRMC and they were working on making testing available to the citizens to be tested without being admitted. There will be drive-through testing for asymptomatic individuals using the canopy at the hospital. The Chair said he suggested having service in Quincy, Chattahoochee and Havana and was told they did not have the capability in Havana and Chattahoochee to do the testing because of the lack of a fax lines and ways of transferring the specimens.

Commissioner Taylor wanted clarity; was that something they were working towards? Chair Viegbesie said it would be no later than next week at the Quincy campus.

Commissioner Holt asked if was to be done by the Health Department and he said by CRMC. She said she also received a call they may have a drive through facility in Tallahassee. Commissioner Holt asked if a person was asked to be self-quarantined, would they be required to use their paid time off, i.e., sick leave or any of that. Holt told them she was unsure if they worked for a private company, was up to their company's policy. Mr. Hall said that was an HR question and he will inquire tomorrow.

She said she also received a call about the Chamber's assistance with \$250 for persons that were laid off. She said with supplies, contact the Health Council and let them know and maybe they could help fill in as well.

Commissioner Hinson said he posed a question last week about declaring Gadsden County as a quarantine county. Mr. Knowles said there was other criteria necessary for that that did not qualify here.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

13. Updates

Mr. Knowles said he had nothing to report unless there were questions for him.

Commissioner Morgan asked if they were going to meet on Friday to extend the State of Emergency Resolution? Chair Viegbesie said they agreed to have a public meeting on Friday to discuss the County Administrator position on Friday. He said the advertisement was already out. Commissioner Morgan said they were having the meeting Friday to extend the State of Emergency Resolution. Chair Viegbesie asked what he meant and Mr. Knowles stated it was the one that was renewed every seven days. Chair Viegbesie said they could meet and discuss depending on what the Governor's Executive Orders were between then and Friday. Commissioner Morgan said he thought they had already planned on having that along with discussing the County Administrator position, was that what they were planning to do? Commissioner Morgan stated maybe he was jumping the gun. He said his comment would be regarding changes they made last Friday regarding the mandate for the masks. He said he had received several calls and asked the attorney to comment on same. He thought maybe they should "strongly recommend" the mask wearing.

Mr. Knowles said every week they review all the Governor's Executive Orders and if there is something they want to alter or amend, it was at the pleasure of the Board, they could address that. His recollection about the meeting on Friday was that it was specifically going to address the County Administrator position but he was at the mercy of the Board. He said he had received several inquiries about the mask requirement and thought he could clarify that a little more on Friday. He said the main question he has been getting is where they are required, as far as the Resolution is concerned, more concerned with specific public spaces and specific restaurants, pharmacies and grocery stores, the businesses that see a lot of individuals in and subject to the community-based spread. The question was asked why some are not wearing masks here and some of the reason was because people cannot hear them talking and they were maintaining the social distancing that they promulgated to make sure they abided by their own rules. We not involved with enforcement of Resolution, we left up to local law enforcement agencies and municipalities and BOCC does not have necessary authority to tell them how to do it, it is a second-degree misdemeanor, up to \$500 fine, up to 6 months in jail. He added they were not involved in the enforcement but preferred. The mandate was for anytime you were outside of your house in public spaces where members of the public may congregate that may also be subject to community based (Inaudible). He said that was a lot of the questions he had been getting and in the long run, the goal was to ensure the health and safety of the citizens of the County.

Commissioner Morgan thanked the attorney for his comments. He asked if the Board had the power and authority to enforce.

Mr. Knowles said the Governor issued two specific Orders that specifically dealt with what municipalities and Counties could and could not do and as long as they did not do anything that the Governor said they could not do, we have the authority pursuant to Florida Statutes to do what needs to be done to protect the health and safety of the County up to and including mandating wearing masks; establishing a curfew and any other reasonably necessary health measures that might tend to slow the spread and keep people safe. He said as they move forward, they will have to address concerns. He added he did not think they were running afoul of the Governors Orders. He did not think they were in a position where they could speculate and say this did not run afoul and this does, this does not run afoul.

Commissioner Taylor said the only comments she heard in the community was they mandated it, for them to help them get masks and the quality of masks. People want to be safe and they needed to lead by example.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

14. Report and Discussion of Public Issues

Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1

Commissioner Hinson thanked Mr. Hall for his time here in the County. He had questions that was asked by citizens.

Regarding the Corona Virus Relief Act, how many residents in Gadsden County that own small business have received stimulus relief payments from Capital City Bank or any other bank and if possible, share the amount of loans. Mr. Hall said they would have to do research. Commissioner Hinson said the issue was a citizen had almost \$1 Million in one of the banks in the County and had a hard time getting in contact with the bank and had to go to another bank to get assistance.

He asked the timeline in repairing the bridge in Midway. Mr. Hall said he will get timeline from the Director and get with him tomorrow.

He asked the timeline for refurbishing the road between Midway and Quincy. The Board approved that approximately a year ago, High Bridge Road. Mr. Hall said he would get an answer tomorrow on that as well.

He said there was a concern about someone that purchased a vehicle and cannot change the title for the vehicle. He said the husband cannot work now because they cannot get the title changed. Chair Viegbesie said that was something he was dealing with himself and the dealership could not apply for tag either, could not even get a temporary tag.

He said he also wanted to petition to add all non-profits and churches to purchase masks. Pastor Gregory James and Pastor Morris were also helping.

He commended the Board for talking about this. He asked they continue speaking positive, people did not need to see them speaking negative.

Commissioner Gene Morgan, District 3

Commissioner Morgan had no comments.

Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt thanked Mr. Hall, thought he was the second best they have had; he had a calming personality and came up with innovative ideas. She thanked the community for doing a good job.

She wanted to make sure they take advantage of the Health Council.

She reminded the Board there still were concerns in the Building Department. After the recession, they still need to close out projects.

Commissioner Sherrie Taylor Vice-Chair, District 5

Commissioner Taylor said people were asking about the bridge on Hutchinson Ferry Road. Mr. Hall said they should see movement in 2-3 weeks. She said people were asking about the railroad crossing on Shady Rest Road and asked for a timeline. She said there was a comment about a young lady that was making masks for senior citizens. She asked to confirm the time of the meeting Friday and was told 10:00 am. She also asked for "layman's terms" for the language for the masks.

Mr. Knowles said he will try to make language clearer and will send an email out.

Commissioner Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Chair, District 2

Chair Viegbesie said to stay safe, stay healthy, maintain social distance and keep Gadsden County safe.

Receipt and File

UPCOMING MEETINGS

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VIEGBESIE DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:50 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk