

AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JULY 10, 2020 AT 1:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Chair, District 2 - Absent  
Brenda Holt, Vice Chair, District 4  
Eric Hinson, District 1 - appeared remotely  
Gene Morgan, District 3 - appeared remotely  
Sherrie Taylor, District 5 - Absent  
Dr. Henry Grant, Interim County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice-Chair Holt called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m., asked everyone to bow their heads for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CONSENT**

**COMMISSIONER MORGAN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AND VICE CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND**

COMMISSIONER HINSON	YES
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	NOT PRESENT
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	YES
VICE CHAIR HOLT	YES
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	NOT PRESENT

**MOTION PASSED 3-0**

**1. Approval of Participation in the Application Process for the FFY-2019 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)**

COMMISSIONER HINSON	YES
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	NOT PRESENT
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	YES
COMMISSIONER HOLT	YES
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	NOT PRESENT

**MOTION PASSED 3-0**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

***The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.***

Shelia Shellman (sent 2)

“Commissioners mandating obstruction of breathing by Their citizens’ right to live and to breathe clean oxygen are committing an assault on our Basic rights to enjoy Life, Liberty, to pursue happiness and be rewarded for industry~ A continuation of this unlawful mandate is a a breach of their oath to our Florida Constitution and we demand an end to the illegal unconditional mask mandate”

Second email:

“I am writing to urge you to do your part to make sure that mask-wearing is voluntary, not mandatory.

Many jurisdictions are basing their face mask policies on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC has flip-flopped its position on face coverings several times since March but is now recommending that everyone wear a mask in public. This recommendation is not supported by strong empirical evidence. Though there is science to support mask-wearing, there’s also a preponderance of science showing that masks can cause considerable harm and are ineffective in preventing the spread of coronavirus. There is also no science supporting the use of masks by healthy individuals. So emergency orders that are being issued to help protect public health are actually hurting individuals’ physical and emotional well-being – and violating their basic human rights, constitutional rights and religious rights.

Evidence that masks reduce the transmission of viral respiratory infections within community settings is equivocal at best. A recent meta-analysis ([bit.ly/2VHaubd](https://bit.ly/2VHaubd)) that included nearly a dozen randomized, controlled trials and 10 observational studies found that there was no clear clinical or laboratory-confirmed evidence that masks prevent infection. Even the U.S. Surgeon General has noted that masks ‘are not effective in preventing the general public from catching the coronavirus.’ ([bit.ly/31Dgdm5](https://bit.ly/31Dgdm5))

In terms of harm, studies show that wearing a face covering reduces blood and tissue oxygenation – which can be deadly – while increasing carbon dioxide levels. The use of masks can also increase the risk of infection and the spread of viral illness (particularly cloth masks), hinder detoxification that occurs through exhalation, impair the immune system, and cause a wide range other physical and psychological issues. ([bit.ly/31Epv1e](https://bit.ly/31Epv1e)). Moreover, some masks have been found to contain known carcinogens, which put people at risks from inhaling toxic chemicals and having them come into contact with their skin.

There is no science to support the use of masks by healthy individuals, and the World Health Organization backed this up when it said, “WHO stands by recommendation to not wear masks if you are not sick or caring for someone who is sick.” Forcing healthy individuals to wear face coverings is a completely unnecessary intervention that dehumanizes their interactions with others. More important, it eliminates their right to make informed decisions about what risks and precautions they are willing to take.

It is unethical and unconstitutional to subject healthy, law-abiding citizens to measures that can result in physical and emotional harm and that impinge on their ability to move freely throughout society. For those with deeply held religious beliefs, mask mandates violate their ability to abide by natural law and follow their convictions to walk in faith, not fear. As such, the decision to wear a mask is a highly personal one and should not be universally mandated; measures that are meant to protect the community as a whole are not effective if they hurt individuals in that community.

Mandatory medicine and mandated interventions such as social distancing and mask-wearing have no place in a free society; citizens want to maintain the right to make responsible decisions about what is best for themselves and their children based on their own unique circumstances. I urge you to do the right thing, stand for choice and protect all individuals by encouraging – not mandating – the use of face masks in the community. This policy can be bolstered by asking at-risk populations and those who are sick to self-quarantine, with society taking the best care of them possible.

Thank you for your continued leadership during these unprecedented times and for upholding the health and the rights of your constituents.”

**Penny O’Connell, Quincy Main Street**

“Dear County Commissioners and Administrator,

Hi, I’m Penny O’Connell with Quincy Main Street. I’d like to discuss activities on the square for the remainder of the year. Before Covid-19 we were hosting Food Truck Friday every second Friday. We would also like to hold one large event, either Quincycfest or Holiday on the Square, before the end of the year. What are your thoughts on this matter, do you see it happening?

At Food Truck Friday, people have always been socially distanced, tables have always been more than 6 feet apart. We’d have to make sure everyone wore a mask and were distanced in line for the food trucks. We were averaging about 200 people at the event before it closed due to Covid-19.

As far as the larger event, it’s harder to socially distance and you could have large crowds with people in close proximity of each other. I realize those events will be more risky.

I just wanted to get your thoughts on public activities between now and the end of the year. Personally, I’m very cautious due to the fact that my 83 year old mother lives with me but I wanted to see if you’re allowing any events at this time.”

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**2. Approval to Purchase COVID-19 Supplies**

Dr. Grant introduced the above item and stated it was for approval to purchase Covid-19 supplies, marketing supplies and marketing cost to assist the citizens of Gadsden County during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Vice Chair Holt asked what the supplies were and Dr. Grant responded masks and disinfectants.

Commissioner Morgan asked who did the assessment to who determine what needed to be purchased and the fiscal impact to the County. Dr. Grant said no assessment had been made, it would be applied to the CARES Act. Also, this was in reference to what the Board had instructed Staff to do in reference to disinfecting of the buildings they maintain. Commissioner Morgan stated he was not going to approve a broad expenditure for something there may be no need for.

Vice Chair Holt said at a previous meeting, Board members agreed to order masks, Commissioner Morgan asked how many was ordered and Dr. Grant said 5,000, with each Commissioner receiving 1,000. They also purchased hand sanitizer.

Vice Chair Holt said they could be reimbursed from the CARES Act. Commissioner Morgan said those dollars could be used elsewhere and there was no reason not to have an assessment of what this was being spent on.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MASKS ONLY AND THEY COULD APPROVE THE HAND SANITIZER NEXT WEEK AND VICE CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. VICE CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE ROLL CALL VOTE.**

<b>COMMISSIONER HINSON</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>COMMISSIONER TAYLOR</b>	<b>NOT PRESENT</b>
<b>COMMISSIONER MORGAN</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>COMMISSIONER HOLT</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>CHAIR VIEGBESIE</b>	<b>NOT PRESENT</b>

**MOTION PASSED 3-0**

**3. Approval of COVID-19 Resolution 2020-038**

Dr. Grant introduced the above item.

Dr. Grant said Major Woods wanted to present some items.

Major Shawn Wood appeared before the Board. He said yesterday they had 524 positive cases in Gadsden County; 73 hospitalizations; 7 deaths and 34 positives yesterday. He said they have 30 days to make a generational decision. He said they will reopen schools in 30 days and will be judged on decisions they make or do not make.

He said the Superintendent has received a mandate that if he does not open the schools, the Federal and State funding will be cut and the School system will not receive money from the Florida Department of Education or from the Federal government. He stated the School system is one of largest employers in the County.

He said they have 30 days to make a decision. He wants the County to champion in the decision they make. They need everyone to come together, with no politics and come up with sound and great decision.

He read a letter aloud that he wrote to Superintendent Roger Milton (will be scanned in behind final minutes).

He hoped the Commission could reach other bodies and have a collaborative meeting to get into an in-depth discussion about what going back to school meant.

Commissioner Hinson echoed everything Major Wood said. He said the mask was not to protect one's self, but to protect others.

Commissioner Morgan had no comments but appreciated that Major Wood presented the information.

Superintendent Milton appeared remotely before the Board. He said he appreciated the support from everyone over the years. Originally school was scheduled to open August 11, now it has been pushed back to maybe the 24<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup>. His recommendation is to open with parents' having a choice. At end of the last school year, they were able to have one device per home, now they have one device per child. He added, however, some homes may not have internet connectivity and they have been working with providers to ensure the connectivity was as successful as possible. He said with the increase of cases, they were finding it hard to believe that they were being mandated to open schools in those conditions. He said funding was being threatened if they do not open. When they do open, CDC rules and guidelines will be followed as close as possibly can, and they will be working closely with the Health Department. He said it was important they all work together, safety first. He asked that they be supportive of each other and they would do the best they could until November 17<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chair Holt said she always wanted to work with the School System and as a school teacher, she could not see students, especially small ones, keeping masks on.

Mr. Knowles said the original Resolution has no changes with exception to the date. He said in the meeting with the Chiefs, they were asking that civil citations be levied instead of punishing citizens criminally.

Commissioner Morgan asked for the specific agenda item and the fiscal impact. Vice Chair Holt said they could put that on the next Agenda.

Vice Chair Holt asked about the fine. Commissioner Morgan asked about going back to what he has mentioned the past several weeks in changing it to strongly recommend rather than mandating the masks. He felt more folks would comply with that and it would be more efficient.

Commissioner Hinson recommended to go with the officers' recommendation.

Vice Chair Holt asked the attorney if they had to make a recommendation.

Mr. Knowles suggested for each offense, the Commissioners give him an amount they were comfortable with and he would write that into the Order for summation. He said for each individual... Commissioner Hinson said before he made a recommendation, see what all five Board members made that decision. Mr. Knowles asked if the Motion was withdrawn and Commissioner Hinson stated yes. Vice Chair Holt stated it did not receive a second so it died anyway.

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Vice Chair Holt asked if they wanted to make this an Agenda item? Commissioner Hinson stated yes.

Vice Chair Holt asked about the Resolution as stated.

Commissioner Morgan said he had no problem to adopt with the language they had in place last week with the change of the mandate to "strongly recommend" and motion died for lack of second.

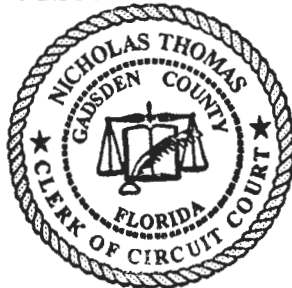
**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED LAST WEEK AND VICE CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. SHE ASKED FOR A ROLL CALL VOTE.**

COMMISSIONER HINSON	YES
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	NOT PRESENT
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	NO
COMMISSIONER HOLT	YES
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	NOT PRESENT


**MOTION PASSED 2-1**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**


**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, VICE CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 1:50 P.M.**



GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

  
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ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

  
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NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk