

AT A DISASTER RECOVERY WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JULY 21, 2020 AT 4:00
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-appeared remotely
Gene Morgan, District 3-appeared remotely
Sherrie Taylor, District 5
Dr. Henry Grant, Interim County Administrator
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Viegbesie welcomed everyone to the workshop and called it to Order at 4:05 p.m. He 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

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 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.

Chair Viegbesie read aloud the process of citizens requesting to speak during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There were no emails received from the citizens.

GENERAL BUSINESS

2. Opening Remarks/Goal for Today

Gary Yates and Tim Moore, Integrity Group, appeared before the Board. Mr. Yates said they were very happy to be working with the County over the next few months to achieve maximum recovery from the COVID-19 disaster as well as some future options related to Hurricane Michael, the HUD possibilities.

He said there was \$8.3 Billion appropriated to the State of Florida and 55% of the money was being allocated to the Counties; the top 12 Counties with a population of 500,000 or above received 100% of the allocation directly from the US Treasury and Gadsden County had not formally received their 25% yet but DEM should be processing that post-haste.

He said the FEMA Public Assistance program was another funding source for COVID-19, began January 20 and was on-going. He added that HUD was the other large pot of money and should be able to apply in September for money from that.

He said the CARES Act money was March 1 – December 30, 2020 and the County has to incur the expense and receive the goods or services by December 30th.

He added the documents provided were draft documents and whatever the County desired, changes could be made.

He further stated that with the CARES Act and HUD money, it was 100% federal money and was no local match, the FEMA money required a 12.5% match. He added that they would be working with the applicants to figure out how to mitigate the local match amount.

3. Overview of Funding Available (CARES Act, FEMA, HUD)

Darryl Cox, Integrity Group, appeared remotely before the Board. He had a sample letter that would be submitted and said the \$1.9 Million was 25% of \$7.9 Million that was allocated for Gadsden County. He said the funds could be used for anything that was related due to the public health emergency of COVID-19; the expenditures had to be unbudgeted and had to be from March 1 – December 30, 2020. He provided a breakdown of a proposed breakdown of expenses. The largest expense could be for Public Health expenses.

He said the GCDC in conjunction with Gadsden Chamber of Commerce and Big Bend Minority Chamber could work to help get the word out for a Small Business Working Capital Grant Program; Small Business Working Capital Loan Program and Gadsden Worker Training Program and help with applications.

He further explained that with regard to the loan programs, after the loans were paid back to the County, the funds would have to be reverted back to the Treasury Department.

With the Community Rapid Response Program and said there were a lot of possibilities with ways to help the citizens and general public and explained the grants available.

He said the last part would be a passthrough to the six municipalities.

He added that the Plan could be amended and if they allocated funding for something and turned out to not cost what they thought, it could be re-allocated and used somewhere else. They just had to make sure that the funding was used by December 30th.

He mentioned the other document was a breakdown in a spreadsheet format of the program and they have been collecting information of some larger, capital projects that may be eligible for funding from sources other than CARES Act, such as FEMA projects and Hurricane Michael related Community Development Block Grant projects that they would be assisting the County in draft applications for.

Mr. Yates re-appeared and said the spreadsheet and the financial details were organized by funding types and would be handy and was a good working document. He added that the focus

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today was the CARES Act and the plan they suggested that be submitted to DEM did not have to be perfect; it could be changed as needed.

Chair Viegbesie said the document was very explicit even though it was a work in progress. He then asked if the plan had to be submitted by a given date.

Mr. Cox said did not have to be in by certain date. He said the letter and plan was to show the State that there was a plan to utilize the funding so they could get the State to send the additional 75% of the money. It could be operationalized, build out the grant programs for the businesses and citizens but originally, they were told, just never written anywhere, if the County submitted a plan, that could be used to get the additional 75% funding. They were getting word now that with the 75% allocation, a request could be submitted for reimbursement. The money would have to be spent upfront but there may be an opportunity for the County to submit a request for advanced funding for the 75% in order to fund the grant program or some of the other expenses. He added that the money had to be spent by December 30th or it would be lost.

Commissioner Holt said the County was responsible for Healthcare and wondered if between the Board and the School Board, if they go back to school and there is an outbreak, they will send them home and the County would have to move quickly. She asked if they knew what they might be doing with the CARES Act money.

Mr. Yates said the School Board would be receiving their own CARES Act appropriation. He said they would have one year to spend their money. He recommended that the Board work with the School Board and Superintendent and they would be happy to facilitate that because there would be an over-lap.

She asked with the \$3 Million for health care expenses, what out-of-pocket were they looking at for services. Mr. Yates said that was identified in the draft and spreadsheet; it was a variety of costs. She said what she was asking was how they would be paid and he said they would be paying them out of the CARES Act money; between 11 – 12%. He said they would be providing staff in the office to handle the applications from the public if the County chose to go that way; a portal has been built and would be handling the processing of what comes in, processing those and making sure everything was appropriate and recommending approval of the applicants that apply.

Chair Viegbesie asked if the payment to Integrity was coming out of the \$7.9 that was appropriated for Gadsden County. Mr. Yates said they already have the task order and suggested they County pay them out of the CARES Act money. He added the money was 100% federal and there was no match required.

Chair Viegbesie said his question was looking at the breakdown of the programs, that came to a total of almost \$8 Million. Where would the money come from? He said it would come from the \$3 Million for the County costs.

Commissioner Holt said she was glad they were helping; they need comparables; match money to get FEMA and HUD money. He said their service would be to all three areas, CARES, FEMA and HUD.

She said her question would be for the other sections in the document; the loans and grants, etc. She added that she did not want to see their money going to the big businesses because they had more opportunity to get money.

Mr. Yates added that was why they built the portal for the businesses.

Commissioner Morgan said they needed to follow the lead of Integrity Group and let them guide them through the process. He asked if their designation as a fiscally, constrained county would benefit them in any way as far as helping them receive the other 75% of the funds.

Mr. Yates said did not think the status as a fiscally constrained county technically weighted the scoring but could help in the reason for meeting the events and thought it should be included in the letter. He said to the first point, it was noted. There was going to be a balance between making the criteria easy enough for businesses and citizens to be eligible and to receive the funding but the other side was the County was still ultimately responsible. If the County did not have at least a somewhat good control on who was eligible and who was not and what type of mechanism used to show they had expenses or damages related to COVID-19, it could come back on the County. He said he did not want to jeopardize the funding and have U.S. Treasury or DEM come back on them.

Mr. Knowles asked how DEM and Treasury would verify everything.

Eric Miller, Integrity Group, responded and said the County would be subject to the Single Audit Act since the (inaudible). The Chair asked that he slow down so he could be better understood. He said the conditions that were imposed in Section 5000 of the CARES Act, that was what allowed the \$150 Billion dollars to go to the 50 States and territories of the United States. As long as the three conditions that were previously mentioned were met, being an unbudgeted need for COVID related expenses that occurred between March 1 – December 30th, then there would not be any disallowances or fallbacks. He said that was communicated by the U. S. Department of Treasury. He added that the most recent clarification came out as recently as July 8th and as long as they adhere to the three provisions they would be in good shape.

Mr. Yates said in response to Commissioner Morgan's comment about fiscally constrained counties, it is said in the letter that they were requesting immediate disbursement of the total funding, that "the initial plans to handle this program through the FEMA-style reimbursement process *will not work* for small, fiscally-challenged counties like ours" because this county could not afford to spend \$8 Million and wait six months for reimbursement; the cash was needed up-front.

Commissioner Hinson said he would like to see a sample plan for the Case management for the CARES Act funding and wanted to see more information regarding the turn-around time for giving funds and/or case management follow-up.

Mr. Yates said they could provide more details; it really was the task order they had been provided and what had been approved.

Mr. Yates said once the Board approved the categories, amounts and criteria that was anticipated for business loans or grants, their job would be to write protocols and policies. He said the first step was to figure out the ballpark wanted and if they wanted to do a residential grant, business

grant, business loans or what they wanted to put in the effort and it would be staffed out and write out what Commissioner Hinson was referring to.

Commissioner Taylor said she had concerns; if they take 10-12% of \$8 Million, they were talking about somewhere in the neighborhood of \$790,000 that would be paid in consulting fees and that was a lot of money. She said she looked at the proposed layout and most of it was redundant. She said there was a couple of areas that has IT on it twice, couple of areas that have Public Safety three times and areas that talk about training 2 – 3 times on the same sheet of paper. She said what she could appreciate with regards to the public health expenses, was to be able to go back to March, 2020 and start recouping what has been spent with regards to healthcare and COVID. She added she could not see spending money on something already being done. She further said most of the items on the list had already been rendered, already been done, could they utilize additional IT, yes. She had concerns of some of the things on the sheet. She said they did get an alert today that 200+ new cases in one week and was now at a tad under 1,000. She wanted to see something go towards the build-out of the hospital; this virus was getting out of control and they could utilize the dollars from the Public Health expense to look at a build-out. She felt their fee was too much. She added that she was glad to see GCDC and the Chamber working on this. She said she would like to see the Small Business Working Capital Grant and would like to see the amount increased and added that she was scared of the loan because of the pay-back process and the fact that the County was responsible. She said she would like to see their fee renegotiated.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 5:15 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they had surveyed local municipalities about their needs and asked to conduct a need assessment from local municipalities, faith-based and non-profits because they were the boots on the ground during this unprecedented time. He said there were a lot of things he had heartburn about. He said they needed to have a meeting every Friday until they were able to get this together. They need to address homelessness and mental health needs and need to look at broadband. He said they needed to meet again and bring a wish list to the table.

Chair Viegbesie said for them to understand this money was for COVID-related and anything prior to March 1st was not eligible. The timeline was for from March 1st to December 30th.

Commissioner Taylor said this was for the gentleman that spoke after her spill. He talked about the effectiveness of their group with regards to the funding that was coming to the County. She said the \$8 Million was an entitlement and the County would have gotten it no matter who was standing there. She said Broadband was previous to COVID but because of the stay-at-home measures, it has become a necessity because of COVID. She said she was hoping from the Chair's synopsis, it would be included in the initiative moving forward.

Dr. Grant said he wanted to clarify some on the projects. The projects listed was in response to what they requested from Department heads, Constitutionals and the County Commissioners. Something of the things referred to by Commissioner Taylor was things that have been done and were on the list for reimbursement, not on there to be done.

Commissioner Hinson said he wanted to reiterate Commissioner Taylor's comment about broadband.

Commissioner Holt said they need the company to go after the funds, they did not have staff nor the capability to do it. They were going to have to have more meetings.

Chair Viegbesie said they will have another workshop and now that they had the document, they could start making notes before the next meeting.

Chair Viegbesie asked that the municipalities to join in.

Jack McLean, City of Quincy, appeared remotely before the Board. He said they did submit a letter of things they thought should be looked at. One thing was: building beds for the hospital; building capacity for non-profit organizations was a good thing, whether for the Health Council in terms of helping renew the commitment and enforcement of the Executive Orders of the County Commission as well as the Cities throughout the County in terms of mass and social distancing; on the educational front they had learned a lot but this was education on how to comply and keep distances open without having to talk about staying at home; look at training with GTI; do the Broadband; how to open back up the Chambers, need PPE's and other things so that they could open up meetings and have the public come back in; Public participation and spending money from a technological standpoint on how to increase public participation and to mimic what they used to have; agreed that they could reduce the costs if they were to look at contracting out or looking at other entities. Some people already have a platform so they would be able to do it. He said the cities would also be subject to a single audit as well and on the reimbursement before they receive the money. He said they have already spent \$600,000 already, and they need to be reimbursed for that to be able to spend more.

Antonio Jefferson, City of Gretna, appeared remotely and said the only thing of concern for him was if they were going to allow the cities to participate, it would be helpful if they could get a clear understanding of the amount of money they will receive.

Lenwood Herron, City of Midway, appeared remotely and said they have submitted their documents to Integrity Group.

Commissioner Holt asked since they were under an emergency order, did they have to abide by advertising. Mr. Knowles said he would do research during the brief intermission.

Chair Viegbesie said they needed to schedule another meeting.

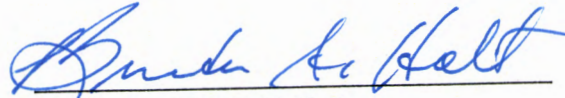
4. Timeframes & Major Objectives
5. Draft Plans for CARES Act funding-Achieving 100% of Allocation
6. Discussion of Recommended Funding Needs & Desires
7. Presentation and demonstration of Gadsden Grant Application Portal
8. Staffing & Support from The Funding Group

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MOTION TO ADJOURN

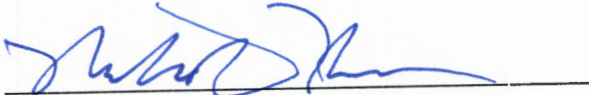
THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VIEGBESIE DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:48 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA



ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:



NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk