

AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JULY 24, 2020 AT 1:00
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 called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He asked everyone to bow their heads for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY CHAIR VIEGBESIE, THE AGENDA WAS APPROVED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE.

CONSENT

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND SECOND MADE BY CHAIR VIEGBESIE, COMMISSIONER TAYLOR HAD A QUESTION. (After the synopsis of the items, the vote was never carried)

Commissioner Taylor asked for a synopsis of each item.

1. Approval of SHIP CARES CRF Agreement

Dr. Grant said this was a housing grant that was received in connection with COVID and CARES Act and was an amount of money to be divided throughout County.

2. Cardio Partners Monitor Loaner Agreement

Dr. Grant said this is a Monitor system EMS has and as long as they are returned for maintenance, they would not have to purchase them.

Commissioner Taylor asked if this money was in their budget and Dr. Grant stated yes, but because it was an agreement, the Board had to approve it.

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 the COVID-19 statement into record.

Bryan Baxley

“Gadsden County Commissioners,

Please consider approval of proposed tower in order to provide dependable phone and internet service to those who travel, live and work in this area. Cellular service is marginal at best in this general area, this could potentially resolve this issue.

Thank you”

Ashley May

“Commissioners,

I would like to ask that you all please support the cell tower proposal for the north Havana area This would be very beneficial to an area of the county that has virtually no cell/internet service.

Thank you,”

Jim Roberts

Dr. V read the email into the record.

“County Commissioners of Gadsden County-I want to thank Chairman Viegbesie and Commissioner Morgan for your support of the first responders of Gadsden County with your vote on the radio system change order during the regular commission meeting.

I want to go on record to say that I am thoroughly disgusted that upon hearing the announcement of Agenda Item 8 that Commissioner Taylor would immediately call for a notion to deny the order and then to hear Commissioner Hinson start laughing was completely inappropriate and unprofessional. I do not know what you all think is so funny about the lives of your constituents and your first responders, but I am appalled and find it disrespectful to all of us who respond to help citizens when they call.

Again, this week volunteer firefighters across the county responding to several incidents during a severe weather event July 22nd were unable to communicate using our current radio system. We again are met with dispatch telling us ‘all they can hear is static’ or ‘we are unable to copy your radio’.

In your infinite wisdom you have again FAILED the first responders of Gadsden County by not taking action on the Public Safety Radio System change order. You should be ashamed. If a constituent dies or a first responder dies because of your inability to act you will be paying a lot more than \$400,000, I can assure you of that.

As a first responder in this County I have no confidence in you and would hope that you would have made this more of a priority than you have. This subject is making me sick because I put my life on the line, without compensation, every time the residents of this county call for us to respond. You constantly say that you do not want to delay this process, but you continue to do something, by your votes, to delay this project.

You need to start thinking about your constituents, you need to start thinking about us first responders and quit delaying. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH-please make this more of a priority and take action to approve the change order now. You have a duty to your citizens and in my eyes you are currently failing that duty.

Jim Roberts”

Commissioner Taylor said she had a problem and was not sure it should it should have been read now and not at a regular meeting because it was not an emergency item that they have entertained during their COVID Resolution meeting. The other thing was that particular item that was voted down by herself had to do with enclosures around towers and had nothing to do with the communication system. She said they have given Motorola ample funds for the system. She voted to not pay ½ Million dollars to put three fences around three towers. Not the walkie-talkies, not the system, not the towers but three fences were what she voted against. She thought they could do that without paying out that much money. She said it was not done in jest to make fun of. She said she would address this again at the proper time and did not think today was it.

GENERAL BUSINESS

3. Approval of COVID-19 Resolution 2020-040

Chair Viegbesie said the Commissioners had the revised draft before them and had changes highlighted.

Commissioner Taylor said her intent at the last meeting was to go back to Phase 1 with a 9:00 p.m. curfew and gatherings of 10 or less. She hoped they could look at that and go back to a lock-down. She asked they look at going back to where they were before when they had a curfew at 9:00 p.m.

Mr. Knowles said there have been two minor and two major changes; the curfew changed to 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. and internet cafes were now closed. There were no changes to mass gatherings.

Chair Viegbesie said restaurants and bars may now operate at 50% of their maximum in-door capacity and the curfew as of today will be 9:00 pm– 6:00 am. and internet cafes were ordered closed.

Commissioner Holt asked if it was limited to 10 people and was told yes. She asked if that included employees and Mr. Knowles stated not at restaurants.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER TAYLOR HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner Taylor said with what she heard from the Governor, were bars open? Mr. Knowles said that depended on how they were licensed with the State; straight up nightclubs were closed. She asked if there were provisions in the Resolution that limited where you had 50% or more of your sales in alcohol and he said yes, it had been there approximately three weeks. She asked about Phase I and Phase II and Mr. Knowles replied he thought there was confusion as to what Phase I and Phase II were. Phase I was the re-opening of the County and businesses and involved 50% with 25% capacity reopening. He explained the difference in the phases and the “lock-down” was not a “phase”.

Chair Viegbesie wanted to emphasis that wearing a mask was still a mandate while in public.

Commissioner Taylor said once they approved the document, how was it being transmitted to law enforcement? They should have some type of contact with the Administrator, PIO or someone so there could be clear interpretation of what was being adopted and should be enforced.

Mr. Knowles said when they do the updates, they do try to call the Sheriff, Col. Collins and get input from law enforcement, EMS, etc. As far as dissemination goes, he knew that Ms. Robinson and Mrs. Bradley often sends them out right after being signed.

CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND TO THE MOTION.

Commissioner Hinson said he had no problem with the curfew being from 10 pm-6 am to accommodate lawn care and car care.

Chair Viegbesie deferred to Col. Collins.

Col. Collins said it was their will to keep the curfew from 9 pm-6 am.

Commissioner Hinson said he could not go against what law enforcement wanted and he was a team player.

Commissioner Taylor asked for a summation of everything to be voted on

Mr. Knowles said the curfew would be from 9 pm – 6 am; internet cafes were closed; private gatherings and gatherings of individuals outside of their homes was limited to 10 people; restaurants and bar capacities were limited to 50% of their permitted capacity but does not apply to Walmart, Piggly-Wiggly, etc.; camping was limited to camping groups of 10 in usual recreational vehicles they were camping with; they were permitted to exceed the 10 person restriction provided they were within a certain radius of the RV and the mask ordinance was still in effect.

Commissioner Holt asked about the immediate area and Mr. Knowles said the goal was to not restrain people from trying to get out but also maintain a social and personal distancing.

CHAIR VIEGBESIE CALLED FOR THE VOTE.

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

MOTION PASSED 4-0

Commissioner Holt said since they were under an emergency status, she wanted anything dealing with any items, she wanted all communications to go through all commissioners at the same time.

Chair Viegbesie said he had no problem with that. If a commissioner asked a specific question of the County Attorney or the County Administrator, should the response go to that commissioner or to all. Commissioner Holt said it was a matter of public record and should go to all of them.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THEM, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 1:52 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk