

AT A SPECIAL WORKSHOP/SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY,  
FLORIDA ON AUGUST 5, 2020 AT 2 P.M., THE  
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Dr. Anthony Viegbesie, Chair, District 2  
Brenda Holt, Vice-Chair, District 4  
Gene Morgan, District 3- absent  
Sherrie Taylor, District 5  
Eric Hinson, District 1- appeared remotely

**Staff:** Dr. Henry Grant, Interim County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Beth Bruner, Deputy Clerk

**1. Welcome**

At 2:02 p.m. Chair Viegbesie welcomed everyone to the Workshop/Special Meeting on Disaster Recovery.

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Viegbesie asked everyone to bow their head in prayer, he then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

*Commissioner Taylor stepped out at 2:04 p.m.*

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [Citizenstobeheard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:Citizenstobeheard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, August 5, 2020. This allows adequate time for comments to be made part of each meeting's Official Record and considered carefully by Commissioners and staff. Comments submitted after the deadline, but prior to the meeting, will be added to the official record, but the County cannot guarantee that Commissioners and staff will have adequate time to review comments prior to the meeting.

A Marion Lasley- Read into record by Chair Viegbesie.

*Commissioner Taylor returned at 2:07 p.m.*

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**2. Review and Consensus of Spending List**

Dr. Grant stated the review had to do with the funds for the CARES Act, and the Board could proceed with items 2-5.

Chair Viegbesie opened the floor to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Holt asked for Integrity to review while the Commission looked at the list to see if everyone was at the same point.

**Gary Yates, Sr. Partner for The Integrity Group**, stated the plan had been submitted to the Division of Emergency Management and he had not been notified that it had been assigned out to be handled and a contact would advise when that happened. He said the spread sheet showed FEMA and HUD for context, as well as CARES Act. He stated many items on the spreadsheet could be funded by FEMA or CARES, and the longer-term projects were HUD projects.

Commissioner Hinson asked that this meeting be only about CARES, not FEMA or HUD.

Chair Viegbesie said yes, the meeting today was on the CARES Act and he asked Integrity to focus on CARES Act money only.

Mr. Yates gave an overview of requirements outlined by the U.S. Treasury for CARES dollars. He stated the focus was for the Board to determine the most critical items and to see if the amounts needed to be modified. He stated Frederica was taking notes of suggested changes requested. He said he would start at the top of the list.

**SMALL BUSINESS:**

Mr. Yates read from the handout regarding the Small Business Assistance Grant Program.

Commissioner Holt said she wanted to find out if the same people were being funded over and over when some have had no funding.

Mr. Yates said he could build that into the application process and ask if a company had received PPE or a Business Grant, and he asked if it was a disqualifier.

Commissioner Taylor said her position was, if the County went through the process and found those who had not received any funding first and there was still eligibility funding available, she thought it was not a disqualifier, but a priority to fund others who had not been funded yet. She stated she had a different amount. She asked if anyone knew what the majority of employees was at a business in this County, and asked if it was 1-15 or 16-24. That answer would help her narrow down if the amounts needed to be increased.

Chair Viegbesie said the Chambers would have those numbers.

Mr. Jefferson from GCDC said the 1-5 employee range was the majority in Gadsden County and some businesses the program should target was 6-10.

Commissioner Taylor said 1-15 encompassed both groups. She wanted the heaviest impact on small businesses. She suggested 1-15, \$7,500 and to stay at \$10,000 for 16 and up and she put \$1.4 Million in that line item. She was fine with rent payments for \$3,000, and fine with the GIG for \$2,000.

Commissioner Hinson said he agreed with Commissioner Taylor for 1-10 at \$7,500 and then 11-24 at \$15,000.

Commissioner Holt said on the sheet, 1-15 was already \$7,500 and she asked Commissioner Taylor if she was asking to keep the 1-5 and 6-10 give \$7,500. Commissioner Taylor said yes and Commissioner Holt asked her what her numbers were for \$15,000. Commissioner Taylor answered she stayed at \$10,000 and Commissioner

Holt replied it was at \$15,000 on the form. Commissioner Taylor said she had no problem with the \$15,000.

Chair Viegbesie asked Integrity to provide what was discussed today with a more concrete overview on what the Board discussed.

Mr. Yates said that should be able to be provided the following day, Frederica was taking notes and making changes on the document.

Commissioner Taylor thought the BOCC needed to know as the meeting progressed, and asked Dr. Grant to get staff to walk the numbers with the meeting and make sure they stayed within the budget.

Mr. Yates said they would have a number. He asked Commissioner Tylor if she bumped Small Business Grants to \$1.4 Million from \$1.2 Million.

Commissioner Taylor answered yes, she said 1-12 for \$7,500 12-24 for \$10,000 and \$1.4 Million on that particular item.

Commissioner Holt said larger business had probably already applied for money the first time so there may be more money in this category than any others because the larger business were apt to have had capability to apply for money than the small businesses. She wanted to get money to individuals. She stated she was fine with small business staying at \$1.2 Million because she thought there would be money left there because some large businesses had already received money and she was fine with the residence assistance too.

Commissioner Taylor stated she went up to \$1.4 in small business because she increased the \$5,000 to \$7,500 and wanted everything covered.

Commissioner Holt stated on the worksheet, the amount was \$7,500 at 1-15, not \$5,000 and she thought \$1.2 Million would work. Commissioner Taylor wanted to stay at \$1.4 Million.

Commissioner Hinson said he could live with \$7,500 and \$1.4 Million if that was the will of the board. His amounts were 1-10 \$7,500, 11-24 \$15,000.

Chair Viegbesie said he would take whichever the Commission wanted. He wanted to make sure the County was equitable in communication of the projects and the expenditure.

Dr. Grant asked for clarification for 1-10 \$7,500 and 11-24 \$15,000 and bumped up to \$1.4 Million and Chair Viegbesie said that was correct.

**RESIDENCE:**

Mr. Yates said \$1.8 Million was to provide households of 5 or less \$3,000, and 6 or more \$5,000.

Commissioner Taylor said a good percentage of students wanted to return to school and she did not agree, she reached out to find out why there was such a high interest in getting the children back into school and she found the parents could not afford kids to

be home. She stated there needed to be as much money in this line item as possible but also needed to concentrate on some areas that were impacting the ability to provide a safe environment for children. She said utilities, rent, food, household items, clothing and transportation. She thought that serious consideration was needed for how the County could help and make sure what the County did for them could help make it easier for the children to stay home. She stated it had not panned out well for a lot of places when they opened the schools and daycares. She said the Board needed to go higher than \$1.8 Million and she was open to listen. She stated with this item the Board would need to be creative on how the money went out with direct payments to utility companies and landlords. She further stated SNAP was doing well as far as food was concerned.

Chair Viegbesie asked if Commissioner Morgan was on the line, Ms. Steele said she did not see him.

Commissioner Holt said she had no problem right now. She asked if the \$1.8 Million was an estimate per population.

Mr. Yates said the \$1.8 Million was a number based on an anticipated population.

Commissioner Holt stated things had to be virus related and that may be difficult to prove for some people and the Board may need to visit this item again after the process was started because there would be money left over in this category. She said people had to provide data that their request was COVID related. She suggested to go up to \$4,000 and \$6,000.

Chair Viegbesie asked approximately how many households this \$1.8 Million might cover.

Mr. Yates said the requirement was people had to show need and a couple of Counties made that mistake and just handed out money and were now catching a lot of heat because there was no demonstrated need and that was why evidence was needed to be provided with documentation.

Commissioner Hinson said during Hurricane Michael, young people received \$400-\$500 in SNAP benefits while Senior Citizens were getting \$19.00. His humble opinion was to put an emphasis on a group that made a certain amount of money per year and give to seniors and the disabled.

Chair Viegbesie stated if people were on a fixed income, then COVID-19 did not affect their income, he said the CARES money was not a way to give money to people to adjust for cost of living expenses. He further stated the money was for people financially impacted by COVID-19.

Commissioner Hinson said a lot of seniors took care of kids while parents were at work, and they were affected and directly impacted by COVID-19.

Commissioner Taylor said she was ready to move on the item. She said the \$1.8 Million was good, she thought the \$4,000-\$6,000 was great but it needed to state "up to" \$4,000 and up to \$6,000. She further stated some citizens may just need help with utilities and being involved with the school system, she knew the average house size would be 5 or less with regards to children.

Commissioner Hinson stated he agreed with Commissioner Taylor.

Commissioner Holt said she was good with those categories.

Mr. Yates said there were 17,000 households in Gadsden County and if the Board was awarding \$5,000, it would cover 360 households, and if providing \$3,000, it would cover 600 households. The County would be looking at 500-600 households that would be touched by this.

Commissioner Taylor stated that would be only if they were awarded the full amount.

Mr. Yates questioned how to determine the amount awarded.

Commissioner Holt said she had the same question and thought it could be done in tiers, which would have to be set up in the portal.

Mr. Yates stated the challenge would become how citizens demonstrated they were behind on rent, utilities or mortgage and then how to determine what else they would get. He asked if citizens just said "I need food and \$1,000 for household expenses." He stated determining how much they would get was tricky.

Commissioner Holt said it would be tricky no matter how it was done. If the amount was on the application that was a definite. If rent or mortgage had taken up that amount there may be nothing left. From March until now, rent and a utility bill would most likely eat up that amount. She did not think it was going to be a problem that they would get up to that amount.

Mr. Yates stated Integrity would explore options on how that could be done.

Commissioner Holt said if the landlords were able to apply for the funding out of the other amount of money (small business) and cancel those two out.

Mr. Yates said it was the recommendation of Integrity that payments to utility, mortgage companies and landlords would be a two-party payment that could not be spent other than that particular need.

Commissioner Hinson said people had borrowed money from others to get by. He thought the Board should look at that to see if they could get paid back as well.

Commissioner Taylor stated during the intake process, specific questions would be asked to determine what was needed. She questioned if money borrowed by family was between family or if they were treated like a lender. Her concern was whether or not the funding agency was okay with this money being given to a family member that lent money to make a mortgage payment.

Mr. Yates said a two-party payment could be done.

Chair Viegbesie said with the two-party payment, he wanted to make sure the County would not get in trouble and there would need to be proof of helping family, but needed to be very sure or the County had to pay it back. He was worried these kinds of payments

would get an audit and said this money should not be used as a means for people to just draw from.

Commissioner Holt said the Board would have to look at the money being spread out too far and an evaluation of it coming back.

Mr. Yates stated it was all in the documentation. He further stated there was a landlord that did not receive rent and a tenant who needed money to pay the landlord, it needed to be certain the landlord would get the rent payment. If a family member loaned money to pay rent, his personal opinion was it would be difficult to defend a payment because they were not involved in the actual transaction between landlord and tenant.

Commissioner Taylor said in that situation she wanted the legality on it and stated that families helping each other happened in small rural counties.

Commissioner Holt said she did not want to get involved in paying family members. She was for helping but thought it would be trouble getting involved with paying family members that had helped. She further stated she wanted to make sure the County had a set standard and made sure it worked. She said to stay on track and help as many people as possible.

Mr. Yates said there was \$240,687 from the Florida Housing Finance Corp. and the SHIP office and the County would administer payments but it was strictly for late mortgages and rent.

Chair Viegbesie stated that he had previously said not to mention any money but CARES.

**BROADBAND:**

Mr. Yates said in the last meeting two-phases were talked about; an immediate phase and long-term phase, and there was an opportunity for a much larger project through HUD CBDG DR money.

Chair Viegbesie said the spreadsheet was just Phase 1, and was what CARES would provide the County and he wanted the focus on that first phase.

Commissioner Holt said the amount for Broadband went from \$1 Million to \$800,000. She said the Hospital buildout would have 3-4 Phases and that would not help the County now. She said nothing in the document would help curve the numbers today and that was not a healthcare issue and the Hospital would not be ready as a shelter. She said there was a need for something to drive numbers down. She further stated the communications deal was where the CARES would work to get Telemedicine. She thought without telemedicine the sick people would stay home and the cases would go up, not down. She wanted \$1.5 Million for Broadband.

Commissioner Hinson said he had Broadband at \$1.8 Million at one time and thought the number should be \$2 Million just to do towers because the kids started school soon and needed internet access.

Chair Viegbesie asked what the Commissioners wanted, \$1.5 Million or \$2 Million.

Commissioner Taylor said kids needed options instead of going back to school. \$1.75 Million was her number and she thought every household in the entire County needed to be connected to the internet.

Chair Holt thought \$1.5 Million was reaching but said to get it started and it would be done in phases.

Chair Viegbesie said the School Board was having some of their CARES money going towards this particular part of the discussion. He said to work with school districts with the \$1.75 Million because they would be one of the users. His amount for Broadband was \$1.7 Million.

Commissioner Taylor agreed to \$1.7 Million and said the school had \$2.3 Million and she did not know if it was all allocated. She was hoping to see some of the \$1.7 Million come back in collaboration with them.

Commissioner Hinson stated the amount should be \$1.75 and the other Commissioners agreed.

Mr. Yates reminded the Commissioners the money had to be spent and services delivered by Dec 30<sup>th</sup> and the \$1.75 Million would have to be spent by that date.

Chair Viegbesie said if the County met the service provision qualifying criteria the money should be spent easily and Commissioner Holt said she did not think there would be a problem and stated the categories were flexible.

Chair Viegbesie agreed and said if the \$1.75 Million was not all spent or more was needed, money could be moved.

**HOSPITAL/TEMPORARY SHELTER BUILDOUT:**

Commissioner Holt stated it took a specialty group to say the County could do some build-out in a hospital because the County had a drastic need right now for a hospital. The building could not be renovated as a shelter, but could renovate as a hospital that the County used as for a shelter until the hospital was up and running. She did not know if \$600,000 was enough to start. She asked for \$1 Million in order to get it started. She stated ACHA had to do four different inspections as the project went along.

Commissioner Taylor agreed to \$1 Million but thought the County needed to move forward with something because what was in front of the BOCC was having a shelter available for people who tested positive. She wanted to move forward and let the architect know it was needed first as a shelter to isolate and to keep in mind the County wanted a full hospital at some point and to be mindful as to where some equipment needed to go. She further stated hurricane season was coming and there were a large number of positive COVID cases in the County, and there was a need for housing in case they needed to evacuate.

Chair Viegbesie said his estimate on the worksheet was out of \$7.9 Million, \$5.95 was allocated, and cities and others were left.

Commissioner Holt asked to schedule a time to walk the Hospital as a Board with Administration and an Architect and look at the facility.

Commissioner Hinson stated he wanted to put as much into the hospital as possible. He was willing to put more than \$1 Million into it. He stated the top 3 things he was focused on were the Hospital, Broadband and the Homeless.

Commissioner Taylor told Mr. Price there was a funding that had \$10 Million (Endowment Fund). She stated there were other projects in the CARES Act that needed attention. She asked if the Board looked into doing more than the \$1 Million could buy, and asked if the County could use another source of funding to build-out a project that was using CARES Act money. She stated \$1 Million could come from the Endowment Fund and be placed with the project, but she did not want to cross hairs if another funding pot was used.

Mr. Yates stated to be careful for no duplication of funding, however, it could be set that different funding could be leveraged together.

Commission Taylor confirmed the County could spend money initially from CARES Act and then what was left to be done could come from the Endowment Fund and Mr. Yates stated he believed that was correct.

Commissioner Taylor asked Dr. Grant to collaborate with the Clerk and whoever else to get the endowment. She agreed with \$1 Million and tapping another funding source as well. She stated things could not be bogged down because the hospital needed to be up and running.

Commissioner Holt said South Florida used the school rooms for shelter in some situations. She said if a hurricane hit next week, the County would have nothing ready. She told Dr. Grant to have Emergency Management look at that possibility. She further stated normally the Red Cross would approve the facilities, and that was fine until the virus hit. Now that the virus hit, all that was tossed out and the County needed a place for people to go. She further stated something needed to be in place, even if it was temporary.

Chair Viegbesie asked if that meant creating another category of expenditure and Commissioner Holt said no.

Dr. Grant said between the Sheriff and the BOCC helping to fix wings at the high school, they could help but did not have a generator back up for the system. That was put in, to have generator units on those wings to be used for COVID.

Commissioner Holt said that was why she was pressing to get the Red Cross to walk through any of the facilities (Stevens School Project) or any other projects the County may be able to use in case of an emergency.

Commissioner Hinson said the East side of Gadsden County had Old Havana North Side High School and he thought of maybe adding funding there.

Chair Viegbesie said the Board was talking about \$1 Million for the hospital, and now were talking about working with the high school and now Commissioner Hinson was asking to consider adding Havana North Side High School. He asked if the Board was look at spending more CARES money on those or should be coming out of the \$1 Million for the hospital.



Commissioner Holt stated she did not say anything about spending money, she just wanted a walkthrough with the Red Cross.

Commissioner Hinson said he was trying to be proactive and wanted to prepare now to be ready.

Chair Viegbesie stated they were at \$5.95 Million out of \$7.9 Million so far.

**NON-PROFIT OUTREACH:**

Mr. Yates said this was to hire temporary workers to do outreach and provide PPE, disinfectant spray, applications, and evacuation plans to the communities and that was based on 12 residents doing that job at the cost of \$100,000 over 3 months.

Commissioner Taylor said there were 7 or 8 things in this category that did not make sense. They were the \$100,000 and then the 2 or 3 IT items and more disinfecting equipment, she said she looked at the plan that was sent to Tallahassee and shook her head. She stated the same thing was being said over and over with the repeat of columns. There were also legal fees, risk assessment, kiosks for body temperature, remote equipment, she did not understand why \$75,000 for risk assessment was necessary. With the exception of the EMS fire trucks, and what the Sheriff was asking for (not included), she put \$900,000 under the County and the County would take care of the things on the list and some other side things. She did not think food distribution needed to be funded here, she said it could be taken care of in the money that was being given to residents and anything with the County Health Department would fall under the County Administration Office helping out. She wanted \$900,000 or \$1 Million and that would leave \$1 Million to take care of the ambulances (2) and the cities. She thought the County should be given a pot of money to take care of some things. Concerning the Attorney fees of \$50,000, she asked if it was from March-December or March-August.

Dr. Grant stated the list was from March to today's date.

Chair Viegbesie said if all the money was not needed it could be moved. He asked the Commissioners if they agreed on \$100,000 for Gadsden County Outreach.

Commissioner Taylor said she had questions about the amounts that were put in front of them. She stated the PIO was \$34,000, and she asked why a Lobby Administrator needed \$63,000 when that department closed down when the virus hit. She further stated IT was \$91,000, Extension \$79,000. She said that was a lot of money and she had questions about them. She wanted to see a breakdown on how the numbers were decided. She said instead of all the knickknacks she put \$900,000 under the Administrator and he would spend the money, with invoices, and the County would reimburse, with invoice, back into the coffers from using the CARES money. She noted the \$900,000 was for the jail, PPE equipment, disinfectant, cleaning equipment, foggers, videos, equipment, software, website, technology, legal fees, County Health Dept, Public Transportation, Courtroom PPE, body temp kiosk, etcetera.

Commissioner Hinson wanted to look at the homeless population as well, and add another \$25,000 to make \$100,000 and \$150,000 would be better. He further stated he had purchased masks and sanitizer and gave it to people just walking around.

Chair Viegbesie stated if the Board jumped to homeless, that would cause the Board to skip 5 categories of CARES funding that was still in front of them. He stated he would rather let the citizens listening know what each item was and deal with each one in order.

Commissioner Holt said for Outreach, there were people out there testing and it should be used to help. She stated they were testing every Saturday and they gave the information back. She said the Board put this group together years ago for healthcare because the healthcare issue was important to the county. She further stated the \$100,000 needed to stay and more may be needed.

Chair Viegbesie asked what everyone thought about the \$100,00 for the Gadsden County Community Outreach.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought \$60,000 for the Gadsden County Health Council (GCHC) was fine for 2 months. He thought the Board should give to just one organization and let them be responsible for it.

Chair Viegbesie said GCHC was not the only organization doing community testing, other non-profits were working with GCHC to facilitate the testing process.

Commissioner Holt said the GCHC was part of the group and were working together. She further stated the Health Department was also working with them, GCHC was not just members, they were groups that provided all the outreach from diabetes to heart conditions and she wanted to keep them working.

Commissioner Hinson agreed with what Commissioner Holt stated but thought the funding should be \$60,000.

Commissioner Taylor thought \$60,00 for the Health Council. She believed it was best spent if that particular part of the funding was put under County Administration and if there was an event conducted, they could send invoices to the County Administrator office and he would pass it to the Chief Fiscal Officer and the money would be processed that way.

Chair Viegbesie asked if the Commissioners could settle at \$75,000 and they agreed for now, \$75,000 was fine.

**AMBULANCE:**

Chair Viegbesie stated \$416,970 was for the Ambulances.

Commissioner Holt asked Dr. Grant if he checked with EMS about adaptive equipment to disinfect other ambulances. She asked him to get back to her about it.

**DISINFECTION EQUIPMENT:**

Commissioner Holt asked Dr. Grant since the County had all the facilities, was equipment going to be ordered for use at all facilities. She was looking to bundle the cost and order for everyone and use all the equipment at all facilities.

Chair Viegbesie asked Commissioner Taylor to go through her list.

Commissioner Taylor said County Office and Jail protective measures= \$50,000, Risk Management= \$75,000 to include; Legal Fees, kiosk for body temperature, remote courtroom video equipment= \$3,500. She said she did nothing with the \$150,000 from the business development and did not touch homeless population because she thought that should be separate. County Health Department was included in the bundle. She did not include the food distribution because she thought it was covered under Residents Assistance. She stated four things for the Sheriff were new and she asked Dr. Grant if the Motorola bill was from before March so it could be recouped, so she did not put those four items from the Sheriff's office in either. Technology at \$471,000 was brand new from the Property Appraiser. She stated the Constitutionals were not in her bundle total, she looked at the items on the list and took out duplicates along with Legal service fees and the County Health Department. She looked at the \$900,000 and thought it should take the County from March 1 throughout December.

Chair Viegbesie asked if the handout was up to today's date or if it was projected to December.

Dr. Grant stated they were expenses for reimbursement that were already incurred.

Attorney Knowles stated his law firm had not incurred \$50,000 in additional legal fees and that was the only one he could speak to. He understood the legal fees for him were from March through December and if there was an overage it would go back.

Dr. Grant stated all but the Attorney were expenses for reimbursement that were already spent.

Chair Viegbesie asked if the amount shown was for the current PIO or during the time the County had a contract with Mr. Brown.

Dr. Grant stated it was from Mr. Brown.

Commissioner Taylor said the BOCC needed to look at his time to make sure, because it was a high amount.

Dr. Grant stated that was what the County agreed to pay him.

Commissioner Taylor said Mr. Brown had been gone for a couple months and wanted to make sure the \$34,000 was accumulated between March 1 and when Mr. Brown left.

Chair Viegbesie stated Mr. Hall brought Mr. Brown in and asked Mr. Grant to look at the contract to justify that expenditure.

Commissioner Holt stated she wanted to go through the County expenses on the handout. She asked what the costs were for in the different areas.

Dr. Grant said he could email her a break-down of all the sheets because they were the expenses the departments submitted.

Commissioner Holt said she was asking because not everyone would get what they wanted out of this money.

Dr. Grant said he submitted the eligible expenses for reimbursement to the County and if the Commissioners did not want the County reimbursed that was their decision.

Commissioner Holt asked if someone at the Library was laid off, would they fall under the citizens getting reimbursement.

Dr. Grant said the money Commissioner Holt was asking about was not going to a person, everything under #6 (Administrative leave) was money already received and that money would be coming back to the County.

Mr. Yates said looking at the \$550,000, \$300,000 of it was easily FEMA reimbursable. He said he was not sure about what the departmental expenses were, and were they directly related to COVID. He further stated most would be reimbursed by FEMA.

Commissioner Holt said the Board needed to cut somewhere because new ones were just added. She wanted to fund shelter, broadband, hospital and allocation of funding to businesses and residents. She stated the BOCC needed explanations for some items and where the money was coming from.

Commissioner Taylor said she looked at the list again and the PIO amount was way off. IT was covered and she asked for the CARES budget to be fine-tuned. She was comfortable with \$300,000 and asked if invoices would be submitted to the Clerk's office.

Dr. Grant answered they would be submitted to Integrity to determine the criteria but the Clerk cut the check.

Mr. Yates said Integrity would make sure things were COVID related.

Commissioner Taylor asked if Administrative leave had to be COVID related and if the documentation was leave sheets.

Dr. Grant said the leave was not taken by their own desire, they were either positive, exposed, or furloughed.

Commissioner Holt asked why furloughed.

Dr. Grant said not furloughed, people who were either positive or may have come into contact and had to take the 14 days off.

Attorney Knowles stated some was from during the full shut down, people were sent home.

Commissioner Holt said definitions were needed if people were sent home, she asked if they were reassigned to do work in the County in areas that needed work to be done.

Dr. Grant stated once reassigned, they were not on Administration leave.

Mr. Yates said Administrative leave as well as the attorney fees were refundable from FEMA.

Commissioner Holt agreed with the Sheriff, Property Appraiser and some others, but not all of the amounts. She said the money may be needed but may not come out of the CARES money. The plan said EMS needed attachments for the vehicles that would disinfect 6-7 vehicles. She stated the County needed a shelter and the County should apply under other programs.

Commissioner Taylor said she was comfortable with \$350,000-\$400,000 to cover for now and the rest could go into another category. (FEMA or HUD) She said she was seeing duplications, especially IT and Legal Services. She stated she was good with \$750,000 under the Administrator to cover the bundle she listed. She asked again if the list was through December or August 4, and Dr. Grant answered it was through August 4, except the Attorney.

Commissioner Taylor said what was happening between August 5 up until December 30 should either come out of HUD or FEMA. She was ready to move on. She stated it was \$416,000 for two ambulances and asked if that was a firm price.

Dr. Grant stated the ambulances had already been purchased and the price was reduced by \$8,000.

Commissioner Holt said for the Sheriff and Property Appraiser, she took 75% of the amount requested and that gave the Sheriff \$568,093. She asked Mr. Yates if anything could be moved to FEMA.

Mr. Yates answered many of them could be and he thought the issue would be some departments needed to get the budget balanced by the end of September, and FEMA would not come for a couple of months after the claims were filed.

Commissioner Holt said the Property Appraiser would be at \$210,262 if it was cut to 75% of what was asked for.

Mr. Yates said the Property Appraiser technology and cost, Integrity asked for more info about what was purchased to make sure it was COVID related, and further stated some may not be eligible based on what he was looking at in the terms of what was purchased.

Commissioner Holt said that would go for any of them.

Mr. Yates stated the Sheriff's office was solid. He stated some purchases for the Property Appraiser may be something that would become available for other uses if they did not fit the criteria for COVID-19.

Commissioner Taylor said with regards to the Sheriff, she thought if the Board would take 2 of the 4 and fund fully as well as municipalities. She said if they took the vehicles as well as communication tools, it would be \$328,000. She thought that was a good initial start and if they fell under FEMA or HUD, put it where the County would get money the quickest. She further stated if the Board took the other two items for \$350,000 overtime and the \$70,000 and put them in the category where the County would get funding the quickest.

Mr. Yates stated FEMA was quicker (8-week wait for money)

Commissioner Taylor asked Mr. Yates when he had first sent in a reimbursement request to FEMA and it then went to D.E.M in Tallahassee, how long was the process before a check got back to the County.

Mr. Yates said he was not sure; he had seen FEMA payments in 7-8 weeks and was not sure about D.E.M and if they expedited their process. He said there was no inspection of buildings or anything. He further stated the County could get the money moving and add additional items as they came up instead of waiting until the end of the incident period and asking for reimbursement.

Commissioner Taylor said she was okay with 75% or taking two of the four and submit them under CARES Act so the Sheriff's office could get money immediately.

Chair Viegbesie suggested to look at how giving 80% would impact the amount left for others. He said for Municipalities requests it was Quincy \$375,000, Midway \$11,428, Chattahoochee \$19,000, Gretna \$75,000, and there was the FEMA Match for \$588,976, He asked what the Program Planning was and asked Mr. Yates if it was part of the Integrity cost.

Mr. Yates said the last item was Integrity's cost and would be split between FEMA, CARES and HUD.

Commissioner Hinson asked how the Board got that number for Midway.

Chair Viegbesie apologized and said Midway was actually \$39,428.

Commissioner Taylor said someone from the city of Midway asked for and was getting almost \$120,000 from FEMA. She had Midway at \$130,000 under CARES but someone moved it to FEMA and that was where most of the money was. She further stated she had talked with someone from Quincy about the \$300,000 that she had heartburn with doing because she did not think it needed to be reimbursed because they did that trace program and would reverse her decision and now and she supported giving back the \$300,00 because she understood there were more projects that could get done with the \$300,000, if it was given back, that would improve the city of Quincy and she did not want to delay improvement to the city.

Chair Viegbesie said anything that had to do with the CRA, was something that the Commissioners should not even bother to talk about because it had to go through the Legislature and he understood the \$300,000 was something the CRA spent during COVID and was asking for reimbursement.

Commissioner Holt said she put everyone at 75% and said a lot of money was spent on masks. She asked Mr. Yates if the County was accountable for how people/municipalities spent the money.

Mr. Yates asked Mr. Eric Miller, Sr. Partner from Integrity, to speak about accountability. Mr. Miller said for FEMA reimbursement under the Stafford Act they would be required to have documentation; he said the Federal Government required that and DEM would require that as well. On the CARES Act passthrough, it just needed to meet the three criteria's in public law 116-136, within the time period related to COVID-19 or its affects and was unbudgeted, and it would be cleared.

Commissioner Holt said right now the Board was going on what Integrity told them. She further stated it did not matter what they told the Board as far as getting the funding, because if one County's population was 8,000 and put that they needed to get \$20,000 and someone else had a population of 5,000 and they needed \$40,000.

Mr. Miller stated as the awardee to sub-recipients/municipalities, if there was a claw back, the County was responsible.

Commissioner Holt stated when they said that about the County being responsible, she wanted to be sure there was documentation to the County in order to get the money.

Mr. Miller said the County should require documentation and for that documentation to be retained at least 5-years to withstand the audit period. He said the additional legal fees put in by Integrity (for \$50,000) was less than 1% of the \$7.9 Million. Other counties were having greater legal expenses associated with the contracts for the subawards going to the municipal governments and the other awardees, including individual assistance grant recipients and business recipients. He stated the County would need to have attestations, documentation to protect the County from a claw back and would put an initial burden on the legal staff.

Commissioner Holt said the Board need documentation before numbers could be narrowed down. She stated some may or may not get what was requested if there was not proper documentation.

Commissioner Taylor- stated it was obvious that documentation was needed and should need to be in the language. She asked where Integrity was responsible if they sent out an expense that was not good.

Mr. Miller said FEMA prohibited contingency contracts and fees could not be based upon approval. He stated the County had to incur the expense in good faith to respond to the emergency and have had the proper documentation to back up the expense. Integrity ran it through a qualification protocol to determine if it was an eligible service, delivered by an eligible entity, within the time period covered by the emergency event, and it was directly related to the emergency event or the effects of the emergency event. Once processed, the County would then be eligible for reimbursement once it was obligated by FEMA. He further stated the CARES Act was a different process because the money was funded to the County, it was not a reimbursement. The County had already gotten 25% and would get the other 75% when DEM accepted the County plan. CARES money was not a reimbursement program like FEMA, it was emergency financial assistance.

Commissioner Taylor asked if the County was the only one on the hook because Integrity would be looking at the invoices and making sure the criteria was met.

Mr. Miller said invoices received for expenses were being done through normal businesses processes through the County and the County was not asking Integrity for approval before the money was spent.

Commissioner Taylor said she was talking about the \$8 Million in CARES money.

Attorney Knowles said if an invoice bounced back two or three years from now for any of the projects and was approved by the County and Integrity, does the County go to Integrity.

Mr. Miller told the Board they could sue, and that was why Integrity carried general liability insurance and why, in the contract, the County required that insurance.

Chair Viegbesie said he had talked with the Sheriff's office in regards to the expenditure, and one concern was having appropriate documentation and their office stated every expenditure they asked for reimbursement or payment for, they had proper documentation for but Chair Viegbesie had not spoken to anyone at the Property Appraisers office about their documentation.

Commissioner Holt talked about expenditures already taken place, and she wanted to make sure everyone could be reimbursed.

Chair Viegbesie asked for the rough grand total and added it up.

Commissioner Holt said she wanted to move on to what the cities would be funded. She gave totals for Quincy at 75% would be \$250,000- Midway at 75% would be \$29,550.

Commissioner Taylor said she did not agree with cutting Midway, because it was a low request. She wanted Midway to stay where they were at and bring Quincy down to \$300,000.

Commissioner Holt said she was going by the numbers on the handout and it was up to the Board to go up or down. Chattahoochee \$14,250- Greta \$56,250- Greensboro \$10,000 but there was not a request put in. She further stated the Board could look at what the City asked for and give them that, or do a percentage across the board, that was usually fair.

Chair Viegbesie asked to add cities with what they requested and see where the numbers were and then add the numbers with 75% of the request. He understood the amounts that were being put down now were not carved in stone and the Board could draw from another category if necessary and Dr. Grant said yes.

Mr. Yates said the total including the cities was \$9.462 Million with only \$7.9 Million to spend.

Mr. Miller said without the city's requests, the Board was \$9 over CARES Act Appropriation.

Commissioner Holt said this would need to be workshopped again.

Mr. Miller said that included \$750,000 for the County Administration, 75% of the Property Appraisers request and 75% of the Sheriff's Office.

Chair Viegbesie said cuts could be made somewhere else but would need to schedule a workshop to finish completely. He suggested the portal needed to be ready for small businesses and families to apply.



Mr. Yates replied it was ready to go when the BOCC was.

Chair Viegbesie said there were no changes to the amounts the 1-10 and 11-24 but they may need to take from broadband if needed.

Commissioner Taylor asked if the Board could come in early Friday. She asked for Integrity and Dr. Grant to see what the Board had come up with so far and also talk with the Sheriff's office and Property Appraiser and ask them what they could do without for right now. She also wanted the Property Appraiser to tell if the technology they were asking for was COVID related (\$200,000) She did not want to take from major projects, but if she had to, she would. She further stated to look closer at things for the County. She requested to have the Board meet early next week to say yea or nay.

Chair Viegbesie said he spoke with the Sheriff, and they were willing to see if some money could be moved to come from another funding source. He wanted cities to get as much as possible and stated at the next workshop the Board would look at municipalities.

Commissioner Holt asked Dr. Grant to start the RFP or RFQ for Broadband and see what was out there.

Attorney Knowles asked Commissioner Holt to explain what the RFP would be for.

Commissioner Holt answered to get started to put in hot spots. When discussing the timeframe, people did not know the County was doing any of this.

Chair Viegbesie did research on broadband and asked the Board what kind the County wanted. (digital subscriber line, cable modem, fiber, wireless, satellite, broadband over powerline, etc.) He listed a number of providers and told Dr. Grant to reach out and tell them what the County wanted with the RFP/RFQ.

Commissioner Holt said put an RFP out and anyone who wanted to answer, would answer.

Attorney Knowles said it depended on what the County did. He thought the RFP/RFQ would be advertised and people would apply, he did not think it was prohibited to contact them to be proactive.

Commissioner Taylor asked if a motion could be made to do the emergency purchasing. She stated it would streamline it because there was language in the purchasing binder so the County could go into emergency purchasing mode and that would eliminate the time it took to go out and secure the bids.

**COMMISSIONER TAYLOR MADE A MOTION FOR EMERGENCY PURCHASES FROM 5.10 AND 5.11 IN THE PROCUREMENT POLICY, WITH A SECOND FROM COMMISSIONER HOLT.**

Attorney Knowles said the County's Emergency Procurement Policy would entitle Dr. Grant to purchase indirect of department heads or designee to make the purchases. He said if the County was going with that, it would be Dr. Grant making the decision on his own based on information he had either through a non-competitive bid process or a

competitive bid process and that was what the policy said and he asked if that was what the Board was enacting.

Commissioner Hinson said no.

Chair Viegbesie stated that was why he asked, for clarification to exactly what the motion was and what procurement process the County would follow, the traditional or the emergency policy because there was a document that governed how things were done.

Commissioner Holt said she wanted the approval to be left to the BOCC.

Attorney Knowles stated the policy said it was up to Dr. Grant.

Commissioner Holt said a Commissioner would put in a motion to alter the policy and add the BOCC. She asked the Attorney for a yes or no. Attorney Knowles answered no and Commissioner Holt asked why.

Attorney Knowles said he thought, with a single audit coming up next year, the Board should not substantially violate the procurement processes.

Commissioner Holt asked if that was not more insurance to make sure the process-

Attorney Knowles said he did not think there was an emergency.

Commissioner Holt asked the Attorney if the policy could be changed under an emergency situation. She asked what the process was if the County needed to change the emergency process.

Attorney Knowles answered there would need to be a formal meeting about changing the Procurement Processes with a full board. In looking at 5.11.3 of the Procurement Processes, it said "a standard requisition form with a detailed explanation of court material attached if applicable within 10 work days after the event occurred", he then stated that the event occurred in March.

Commissioner Holt stated she had asked if the BOCC needed to change the policy, and stated the attorney said the Board needed to advertise in order to change the policy and procedure.

Attorney Knowles replied saying legally, he believed the County should have a competitive bid pursuant to where it was sped up that was congruent with the County policies in place, present.

Commissioner Holt said she agreed except when saying the manager was to decide. She said this was not the same as Hurricane Michael, this was a situation where people were dying over a period of time, we never had a pandemic or we would of wrote the Policy and Procedure. She further stated the County needed communication in the countryside and asked how the Board could change the policy in order for it to fit.

Attorney Knowles said it was is in place for situations like hurricanes. He said COVID was a different animal than any other emergency ever faced. He could not, in good conscience, say the purchase of an emergency shelter, purchase of broadband and

other things listed, would constitute an emergency that would cause the County to **a.)** go wildly against their Procurement Policies or **b.)** Alter the Procurement Policies in any way. He said that because when the single audit happened this year, they would look at what the Procurement Policy was and if it was changed or altered, it could get everyone in trouble. He stated he thought the County needed to stick with the Procurement Policy.

Commissioner Holt asked if the Attorney was saying the County probably would not get audited if the Manager chose the company.

Attorney Knowles said yes, because the Board would be following their Procurement Policy.

Commissioner Holt said she did not get this at all.

Chair Viegbesie said he was not understanding correctly. He read 5.10.1, page 27, from the Procurement Policy, Sole Source Purchases and asked if that was something different than what he understood.

Attorney Knowles explained a Sole Source Purchase needed to be looked at differently from an Emergency Procurement. Sole Source Purchase could happen in an Emergency Procurement, and it dealt with that because it said "all measures reasonably possible under the circumstances shall be taken to assure the maximum cost benefit to the County." In 5.11.3 it said "a detailed explanation, if attached within 10 days. Emergency purchases that exceed the competitive sealed bid thresholds shall be approved by the County Administrator after-the-fact." He said it was putting the burden on the County Administrator in the Emergency Procurement section. He further stated if you look at the section that deals with Sole Source Procurement, that was a different provision.

Commissioner Holt said she saw no safety net in the Procurement Policy.

Attorney Knowles said that was the point, there should be a very limited set of circumstances when using public dollars for emergency procurement.

Commissioner Holt stated she would be talking to other attorneys within the hour. She said the County was in uncharted waters with the pandemic, and people were getting infected even as the meeting was being held. She asked if there was a way that an emergency document, in a situation where the County had ever had this emergency before, could be changed.

Attorney Knowles said he said he was advising the BOCC not to do that. Commissioner Holt said she just need to talk to another attorney and Attorney Knowles told her she might need to.

Commissioner Holt said the information needed to be out there and she thought it would be unwise of the Board to put that type of County dollars behind one person no matter what the document said.

Commissioner Hinson asked what were the minimum number of things needed to be current with the policy.

Attorney Knowles answered the standard was reasonable notice, and there were no set days in the County's Procurement Policy. That was why he stated it could be sped up and he did not think the Emergency Procurement should be used in this matter.

Commissioner Hinson said to speed up the process and give RFP and RFQ 1 week.

Attorney Knowles said the best idea would be to make sure that the County advertised 2 weeks (or 1 week) and give them a week to respond and vote on whoever it was after that would get his legal blessing.

Commissioner Hinson asked if within the current policy, there was no amount of days the RFQ/RFP had to be out and Attorney Knowles said correct.

Commissioner Hinson said the Board could speed the process up, go through the process, and give it 1 week.

Chair Viegbesie said he thought the Board could go through the same process but have it sped up and the County Administrator, with his team, would now bring the Board vendors selected, the BOCC would pick one. It was the same process but the BOCC would expedite and do it in a week. He said the County Administrator could reach out to non-vendors as well as advertise it. The County would go through the process but the selection of the vendor, upon the calculation of the RFP's should be brought before the Board for the BOCC to determine who the vendor should be.

Commissioner Taylor said there was a phrase in 5.11.1, that made this a valid process for the Board at this time and it said, "a threat to public health" she stated there were currently 1,600 people that had tested positive for the COVID virus and there were 47,000 plus people in the County, this was now a threat to public health for the people who had not tested positive. She asked if a purchasing item could be amended, and answered yes, it could. She said there was a process and a place to amend anything this body had in writing. She further stated the legal advice should have been shared when asked "what can we do to still fall under the Purchasing Policy we have in our manual." She was **NOT WILLING TO MOVE FORWARD WITH HER MOTION ON THE FLOOR.** She stated the legal attorney had taken a position and dug in, the BOCC needed to back up because there was now worry if the County was covered under the law. She said she would rather take 7-10 days and go through the procurement process. She told Dr. Grant he may also want to put notices on County buildings regarding the bids to advertise and the Board could then choose. In the RFP, she stated, would be hot spots in every household in the County so citizens could do Telemedicine and Distance Learning. She wanted the RFP out ASAP and be back before the Board on August 17.

*Commissioner Holt stepped out at 5:35*

### **COMMISSIONER TAYLOR WITHDREW HER MOTION**

Commissioner Hinson said he would send the Administrator information or tell the Council Friday about how to better use broadband services.

Chair Viegbesie asked him to send it to the Attorney and the County Administrator so Sunshine was not broken and they would pass it along.

*Commissioner Holt returned 5:38*

**COMMISSIONER HOLT WITHDREW HER SECOND.**

Chair Viegbesie asked for prayers for Commissioner Barber, in Liberty County, who had just passed away from COVID, and also prayers for his family.

Dr. Grant asked for clarification on the RFP and asked if it should specifically state hot spots, or just internet service.

Commissioner Holt said hot spots were the fastest way to get communication out there and would be a first phase. She closed with an apology to the attorney.

**3. Review and Consensus on Resident and Business Grant Eligibility Standards**

**4. Next Steps**

**Begin implementation of approved items not requiring procurement.**

**Begin necessary procurement steps, consistent with Federal 2 CFR 200 and FDEM Contract.**

**c. Initial Gadsden Residents/Business Grant Applications (Portal & Paper.)**

**Establish monitoring and reporting processes.**

**5. Adjourn**

**Chair Viegbesie adjourned the meeting at 5:40 p.m.**

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**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**ANTHONY O. VIEGBESIE, PH.D., Chairman**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**