

AT A SPECIAL CARES ACT MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN
AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON AUGUST
12, 2020 AT 2:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Chair, District 2
Sherrie Taylor, Vice Chair, District 5- arrived late
Eric Hinson, District 1- appeared remotely
Gene Morgan, District 3- appeared remotely
Brenda Holt, District 4- arrived late
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Beth Bruner, Deputy Clerk

Absent: Dr. Henry Grant- Interim County Administrator

1. **Welcome**
(Anthony O. Viegbesie, Ph.D., Chairman)

At 2:04 Chair Viegbesie welcomed everyone to the Workshop/Special Meeting and called it to order.

Chair Viegbesie stated Dr. Grant was out for health reasons and he would run the meeting according to the agenda.

Invocation and Pledge

Chair Viegbesie asked everyone to bow their head in silent prayer, followed by leading in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Commissioners Taylor and Commissioner Holt arrived at 2:07 p.m.

Commissioner Morgan asked for the Board to approve the agenda but it was not on the agenda to do so.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH A SECOND BY COMMISSIONER MORGAN. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

MOTION PASSED 5-0

Citizens requesting to be Heard on Non-Agenda Items (3-minute limit)

Public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to citizenstobeheard@gadsdencountyfl.gov until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, August 12, 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.

Chair Viegbesie said there were no citizens to be heard.

General Business

2. Review and Consensus of Spending List

Chair Viegbesie asked Integrity to give a review of the spending list and said he hoped the Board could come to a consensus today.

Mr. Yates said the spreadsheet reflected the work the Board did at the last workshop. Integrity recommended modifications to get within the \$7.9 Million budget. He stated the goal was going line by line and to make any modifications and then the application process would be implemented.

Chair Viegbesie said there were some inequities with the municipality passthrough. He stated Government Managers were on Zoom and he would recognize each one in the conversation. He stated the budget was over the \$7.9 Million that the County was getting in CARES Act Funding. He further stated the budget could be taken one by one and he would leave it to the Commission to discuss because a consensus was needed today.

Commissioner Hinson said Small Businesses had suffered and he thought the BOCC should show them more love because they were hit the hardest. 4 things top on his list were Broadband, Hospital, Small Business and the Sheriff.

Chair Viegbesie said he had met with the School District yesterday and they gave him a plan for reopening which included make connectivity available to students of Gadsden County. He suggested either the Attorney or Integrity kept a running total as the items were discussed. Chair Viegbesie stated Commissioner Hinson wanted to keep \$1.4 for Small Business.

Commissioner Morgan said he recommend to focus on CARES projects. He said some projects and requests were only avail through CARES dollars and some could get multiple funding sources. He stated there was limited funding and a lot of requests. He thought anything eligible through FEMA and HUD should free up CARES Act money. He said people had money paid out they need reimbursement on, like the Sheriff and it looked like they were getting cut 25% and keeping things in CARES money that could be funded by HUD or FEMA. He further stated Chattahoochee only asked for \$19,000 and he had asked them 3 times to make sure it was the correct amount, and now they were only getting \$14,000. He wanted to lock in things that were already expenditures. He said Broadband qualified under another bucket and that would free up \$875,000. He did not have a specific number in mind.

Commissioner Hinson said kids were starting back to school. He thought the Hospital, 5G and Sheriff needed to be taken care of. He said he was big on homeless but homeless could wait a week. He wanted a bid out for Broadband and the Hospital and within a week they should be back in front of the Board and that would show a solid number.

Chair Viegbesie asked the number of households in Gadsden County and Mr. Yates answered 17,000

Commissioner Holt asked what the final number on the back sheet on the table was representing. (\$9,195.00 in red)

Mr. Yates said based on the last meeting of 75% of what was requested.

Commissioner Holt confirmed the second column was requests.

Mr. Yates said the first column were revisions from the last meeting and second column was the requested amounts and he did not include 100% of what the cities asked for, it was split up between CARES and FEMA.

Commissioner Holt said she had no problem doing a percentage. The County would not get all their money back, and would need to take a lesser amount. She asked how much the County portion was and Mr. Yates said not including the Grants was about \$781,000. Commissioner Holt said the County would not get all theirs either, unless there was a good Grant Writer. She stated if there would be cutting done, she thought the BOCC should start with page 1 and keep going. The Board could adjust up or down as needed. She thought 75-80% of what was asked for, cut others and keep going. She further stated the Board was running out of time and something was better than nothing, which would happen if the Board kept stalling.

Commissioner Taylor had specific numbers. She said she would not touch Small Business because it was an avenue that could stimulate the economy. Residential \$1.5 Million. Broadband \$1.5 Million, some money would come from FEMA. She would not touch the Hospital. Community Outreach would be left for now. \$250,000 off of the \$750,00 for the County. She asked if the Manager had rapid testing as part of the County Budget and said he should set aside at least \$30,000 in the money allocated. She said GCDC kept coming back to the tune of \$150,00, she thought the Board said they were not going to fund that particular one with the CARES Act money, as well as the Big Bend and the Chamber. She would fund the City of Quincy \$200,000 for now. She said she was not interested in giving to a food distribution or child care program (\$80,00). \$1,210,000 saved and balanced if you take those particular items off and move forward. She said she did nothing with homeless and the Sheriff should get all that was requested. (\$568,000)

Mr. Yates stated Commissioner Taylor's CARES numbers were accurate. Several Items requested by the City of Quincy had been put into the FEMA column and the City wanted items covered because they had to balance their budget before September 30. \$1.2 Million would cover all cities and the Sheriff from CARES.

Commissioner Taylor said the Board wanted to provide for all, but \$8 Million would only go so far. She stated they could get money from FEMA when it was FEMA time. She stated next week was back to the drawing board with FEMA and suggested to put the items that could not be funded up front.

Chair Viegbesie said his take on the discussion was \$1.2 Million for Small Business- \$1.2 Million for Residence Assistance- \$663,000 Broadband. He stated the School had broadband that would provide services to the citizens on 15 buses that they would park in the county to provide households with internet access. There was a Jet Pack that would provide hot spots for households and it could connect 15-18 devices in a household without impairing connectivity for about \$39.00. He said it was paid by the CARES Act. When the CARES Act expired, he asked how the County planned to keep connectivity, and said the County may need to include that in the County budget to make sure the County stayed connected. He was more concerned with effectiveness and efficiency as to how to provide 5G.

Commissioner Holt said she had asked for the Board to have a meeting with the School Board and Superintendent and had not had one yet. She stated there was no input from the BOCC. She

further stated the BOCC did not have the school's plan because there was no meeting as requested a month ago. She wanted to work together to come to a resolution. She further stated if the County offered Broadband and the citizens wanted it, they would pay the provider. She thought the process was backwards and needed better planning.

Chair Viegbesie said what he was saying was his own exploration with the school and the Manager had not been able to schedule a meeting with the school. He further stated yesterday at 2 p.m., the Health Department and Emergency Management called a meeting and at that meeting was where the School District made a presentation and that was how he got the information, he was just sharing what was in the presentation.

Commissioner Holt said in this case, being an Emergency, the County, School Board and City Managers needed to sit down and go to work and that did not happen and it slowed everything down.

Commissioner Morgan asked the meeting to go back on topic, and Commissioner Holt stated it was on topic.

Commissioner Morgan said he did not think any local boards were trying to avoid meetings or working together and everyone had their hands full and the BOCC should encourage everyone. He stated the Jet Pack would only be as effective as the connection that was available in that area and each one would have a continued monthly bill. He further stated Broadband was not an immediate solution and it was going to take time and could be covered by FEMA.

Chair Viegbesie said he disagreed with Commissioner Morgan that Broadband was not an immediate solution. He said the Jet Pack may be temporary and with more permanent Broadband services, it could mean long term. He said there were people who worked from home and students who need connectivity to work and the Jet Pack was the temporary expenditure that needed to be considered. He stated connectivity was an emergency during COVID-19.

Commissioner Hinson said 55% of students in public school were staying home. With the Broadband RFP, he asked to look at what was best for Gadsden County. He said the Board should be voting on someone to serve the County next week. He asked the Board to stay focused and reminded them school would start August 31st. He asked the Board to approve Small Business, Broadband, Sheriff and the Hospital. He stated almost \$1 Million should go to EMS, and also cover the Sheriff.

Chair Viegbesie said items were skipped on the Agenda and asked to go back and stay in order. When on Item 4, Chair Viegbesie stated the Director of IT, Kembrew Jackson, would give his discussion with Dr. Grant on the Broadband RFP and the Hospital RFP and how they would expedite them. He said City Managers that were on the line and would be recognized to speak were; Quincy- Jack McLean, Gretna- Antonio Jefferson, Midway- Linda Dilworth, Chattahoochee- Robert Presnell, Havana- Brad Johnson, Greensboro- Dennis Henderson.

Commissioner Taylor yielded to the City Managers.

Jack McLean, Quincy appeared remotely and said he was looking for what was already spent and that was \$722,683.03. He said they had spent mom and pops money and could get the request down to \$422,000 and the City had already spent money on rapid testing. **Now asking \$315,000.**

Gretna, Antonio Jefferson, appeared remotely and said \$312,000 was the original request. **Now asking for \$56,000** with a request to reprioritize money.

Chair Viegbesie said as long as the money that went to municipalities was spent within the legality of the CARES Act the municipality had the discretion of what they wanted to use it for.

Midway, Linda Dilworth, appeared remotely and said they looked at items already expended by the city and there was a need for PPE equipment and supply reimbursement and also emergency trips for the police and fire department. She said the original request was \$156,000. She stated for the record an initial request was sent with items for the listing of CARES Act details that could be revised to be more strategic with the things needed for the safety of the citizens and any considerations would be appreciated.

Chair Viegbesie asked if there was a compromise on what the City could work with. He stated they would not get \$156,000 and if it was all or nothing, they would get nothing.

Linda Dilworth stated they looked at the numbers again and they could find another alternative. She said they were now asking \$121,800.

Chair Viegbesie said the passthrough would be giving according to per capita for each municipality.

Linda Dilworth then stated she could get Midway down to \$91,300 for the City of Midway.

Robert Presnell, Chattahoochee, not on the meeting.

Brand Johnson, Havana, not on the meeting.

Dennis Henderson, Greensboro, appeared remotely and asked for nothing. He stated Greensboro could work with nothing but would take what the County would give with appreciation.

Chair Viegbesie said Chattahoochee originally asked for \$19,000; Havana asked for \$60,000 for EMS under FEMA, and none under CARES.

Mr. Yates said Havana was anticipating \$166,000 shortage in utility payments and Integrity informed them that lost revenue was not reimbursable, so the residents in Havana that were delinquent in payments could apply for assistance and get money that way, to which they were satisfied.

Commissioner Taylor said her numbers for the cities were; **Quincy \$250,000 – Midway \$60,000 – Gretna \$60,000- Greensboro \$10,000 – Havana money was in FEMA- Chattahoochee \$20,000 - Municipalities \$400,000 for all.**

Commissioner Taylor thought the BOCC could look at each item, ask each Commissioner if they agreed with the amount and come up with an agreed amount.

Commissioner Holt asked if it was a County facility, did the County manage each one and provide a kiosk at each one.

Commissioner Taylor said it was a good idea for kiosks, and she wanted them in the bundle.

Commissioner Hinson stated Brad Johnson said Havana needed additional help with officers having overtime. He thought Havana should get \$60,00 just like Gretna.

3. Next Steps

a. Begin implementation of approved items not requiring procurement.

Commissioner Taylor said it was time for Commissioners to discuss and agree on an amount for each.

Small Business \$1.2 Million

Residential program \$1.4 Million

Broadband \$1 Million

Hospital \$1 Million

Gadsden County Outreach \$75,000

Municipalities \$400,000

Ambulances \$416,970.44

Risk Assessment \$50,000

COVID Legal Fees \$20,000

Kiosks \$6,000

Remote Video \$3,500

Homeless \$75,000

Childcare Assistance- Commissioner Holt said they could apply under Small Business.

Commissioner Morgan stated all the numbers could be changed.

Commissioner Holy asked under Additional or Miscellaneous COVID Expenses, what that was for and Commissioner Taylor said it was the County's overhead.

Commissioner Holt said there would be a problem with salaries but she did not have a problem with it staying at \$267,000.

Mr. Yates stated the Board was at \$5.3 Million with \$7.9 Million to budget which did not include the municipalities.

County Additional \$267,117.71

Sheriff \$577,289.07

Ms. Steele stated Col Collins and Catherine Poindexter were on the line.

Col. Collins appeared remotely and said the money requested was not for new things. He said new expenses were incurred daily because it was an on-going process. He stated the Sheriff covered Midway after midnight and it was an expense the Sheriff incurred for the City of Midway and everything requested was already spent. He further stated FEMA sent an email stating they would not reimburse for PPE and made it very clear because they knew CARES money was out. He stated Reimbursement was provided to anyone who inquired and felt they should be reimbursed for all of the reimbursement requested because the reimbursement did not cover any cost that was accumulated from "this day forward."

Catherine Poindexter appeared remotely and said regarding the overtime and turnover of officers and exposure to COVID, and in their absence they still needed staff on the street

enforcing law, that was overtime. She stated the Sheriff was just requesting money that was spent to be reimbursed.

Chair Viegbesie suggested to keep \$577,209.00 the Sheriff's Office asked for.

Commissioner Taylor said the Sheriff request was lower than the original request. She wanted to give them \$660,000.

Commissioner Hinson said he agreed with the original request from the Sherriff.

Mr. Yates said \$225,000 of the request from the Sheriff was moved to FEMA.

Commissioner Holt said if possible, go through the list and the Board could add back if it was needed.

Commissioner Morgan said Col. Collins and Ms. Poindexter could tell the amount. He said this was a holding place/target and he would recommend to make the Sheriff whole for the expenses already made.

Chair Viegbesie said there was a workshop and the Board asked the Sheriff to look at the initial request and work with the Board as to what the Sheriff could have moved to another source of funding.

Commissioner Taylor asked if the Dispatch Technology for \$225,000 was that part of the Motorola system that was put in.

Col. Collins answered no, it was for the new radios needed that there was no funding for. Once the new system was online, if new radios were not purchased, there would be no communication.

Commissioner Taylor stated then it may not be spent by December and asked if it could stay in FEMA funding.

Col. Collins said unless the Board was going to pay for it, the Sheriff did not have another funding source.

Chair Viegbesie told Col. Collins CARES money was not a source to balance County Expenditure Budget. He said if the purchases were not due to COVID between now and December 30, it could be moved to FEMA.

Col. Collins said they needed the radios now and had nowhere else to go for funding.

Mr. Yates said \$225,000 qualified for COVID, however, if it could not be procured by the end of the year it would not work and there would be a tougher time getting FEMA to pay for it. He suggested it go under the CARES money.

Chair Viegbesie said the Bord was going to go with \$803,000 for the Sheriff's Office and the radios should be purchased as soon as possible.

Commissioner Taylor said \$803,000 for the Sheriff and \$400,000 for the municipalities and she said that was it.

Commissioner Holt asked for a total.

Commissioner Taylor asked Integrity to give their numbers back.

Mr. Yates had a total of \$6.7 million. He said there was still a few items left. The first item was the 12.5% FEMA Match for \$571,351.58. The total now was \$8.3 million which was \$350,000 over. He stated as Integrity went through the list, there were a couple things removed from the CARES Act, but also removed some from FEMA as well.

Chair Viegbesie stepped out at 4:13 p.m.

Jack McLean thought any money left over should go to municipalities.

Vice Chair Holt said the BOCC was trying to cut a little over \$354,000.

Commissioner Taylor asked to take \$100,000 off Hospital.

Chair Viegbesie returned at 4:16 p.m.

Integrity verified numbers:

Small Business \$1.2 Million

Residential Program \$1.4 Million

Broadband \$1 Million

Hospital \$1 Million

Gadsden Community Outreach \$75,000

Ambulances \$416,970.44

Risk Assessment \$50,000

Disinfectant Equipment and Supplies \$50,000

COVID Legal fees \$20,000

Kiosks \$6,000

Remote Video \$3,500

Childcare Assistance \$0 Apply under small business

Homeless \$75,000

Food Distribution \$0

County Additional \$267,117.71

Sheriff- \$803,000

Municipalities \$400,000

Commissioner Morgan said to take Residence Assistance to \$1.3 and Broadband to \$875,000 and see the difference from that point.

Holt out 4:19 p.m.

Holt returned at 4:20 p.m.

Chair Viegbesie asked what the amount was with Commissioner Morgan's suggestion.

Commissioner Taylor did not want to go that low on Broadband.

Chair Viegbesie said the County may not be able to spend all of the \$875,000, depending on the RFP.

Integrity Total \$6.898 Million, Difference of \$1.1 Million.

Commissioner Morgan suggested to make the municipalities whole.

Chair Viegbesie suggested to go back to \$1.4 for Residence, \$100,000 for the Homeless and then go back and bump up some municipalities.

Commissioner Hinson suggested to give Broadband more and if the RFP was less, it could be given back. He stated people could not get service in their area.

Chair Viegbesie said Broadband was getting \$1 Million and he wanted to make others whole. If the RFP was less than that the County would put that money somewhere else.

Commissioner Hinson said people had concerns about Broadband and could not get service.

Chair Viegbesie said those who were submitting an RFP needed to make sure there would be connectivity in the entire County with no dead zones. He further stated what the Commissioners were working on was a spreadsheet and a work in progress and they were trying make it final.

After more discussion Integrity's total was \$7,732,470.44

Chair Viegbesie said he would put \$25,000 back into the homeless if there was an overage.

Commissioner Taylor told Integrity to make the Homeless go back to \$100,000.

Mr. Yates said there was \$209,000 left.

Chair Viegbesie said to take the \$209,000 and make the cities whole.

Commissioner Hinson said the community would love this and suggested to put the whole \$200,000 to Small Businesses.

Commissioner Taylor wanted to make the cities whole.

Chair Viegbesie wanted to make municipalities more comfortable with the sacrifices they were making and said it would be a good thing to do.

Commissioner Holt had questions for Integrity, she stated the County needed to assign every penny and could not use CARES money for any salary's except overtime related to COVID. She stated people were out and others had to take on extra work. She suggested to make the County whole between now and Dec 30. She thought there needed to be a safety net and it could be moved later.

Mr. Yates said other counties put money aside for staff overtime and unexpected costs.

Commissioner Holt said \$100,000-\$150,000 was needed for people who were going to be out and that may be low. She said that money could be moved in November if not many were out.

Commissioner Hinson said he would like to echo Ms. Holt.

Commissioner Taylor said the BOCC had already taken care of the County. On page 4, \$267,117 could take care of any COVID related expense.

Commissioner Holt said the paper from the last meeting had \$500,000 for County expenses. She asked if that included overtime pay and if it could be set aside until Dr. Grant was back and he could tell the Board what was needed.

Chair Viegbesie suggested the \$209,000 would be left alone until the Administrator was back to look at.

Commissioner Taylor asked for a clean sheet from Integrity and Mr. Yates stated it would be sent in the morning.

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

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

d. Establish monitoring and reporting process.

4. Update on Broadband RFP and Hospital RFP

Chair Viegbesie recognized staff from IT, Kembrew Jackson, who wanted to make a presentation in regards to an update on the Broadband RFP.

Mr. Jackson said an RFP was prepared and was being finalized based on Board direction. Mr. Jackson gave a rundown on service requirements of the RFP. *Provider will staff and support the citizens with any devices or issues that may arise from such services. *Provider will ensure short term devices are cost effective and furnished uninterrupted service while in roaming. *All equipment must operate with efficiency and versatile. *Provider will ensure all maintenance of agreement throughout the duration of the project. *Provider will test the most remote areas to ensure effectiveness and proper bandwidth insurance. *Provider will provide proof of concept in verified references. *Provide will comply with FCC Regulations. *Documentation of existing coverage so there is no overlap or areas missed. *Impact analysis to see if it will be effective and create the solution the Board was looking for. *Engineering plans to make sure all areas are covered and none were missed. *Short- and long-term pricing model. *Service agreement stating if something happened how would it be managed. Mr. Jackson said the most important factor was making sure all this could be completed by the CARES funding deadline of December 30.

Chair Viegbesie asked if it was the service completed or service provided up to the deadline. He stated the sooner was more beneficial. 60% of students, he said, were going remote. He stated to make service available yesterday because class would begin on August 31. He further stated the one that staff thought was most cost effective would be brought before the board and voted on.

Commissioner Hinson said the Board needed to get all the information and as long as they met the minimum qualifications, they should come before the Board.

Commissioner Morgan recommended to make certain the attorney was comfortable with the process the BOCC was moving through and that the Board was following the Procurement Policy.

Chair Viegbesie said he was sure the attorney knew he was responsible as the County Attorney to make sure the BOCC was in legal compliance.

Commissioner Taylor said Broadband was cut from \$1.7 Million to \$1 Million. She asked what if the amount given to IT was greater than what the \$1 Million could purchase.

Chair Viegbesie said that was why \$209,000 as contingency money could go to whatever it needed to go to.

Commissioner Taylor was concerned because the specs given should have mirrored what was being budgeted the time the specs were given. She asked how the Board would be able to get a deal on what they asked for a week ago versus what could be paid for today.

Chair Viegbesie said the families that would not get service, the County would be providing payment until December for Broadband. After Dec 30th funding would be over and owed by the residence. He stated Gadsden County was a predominantly indigent county. He said there was a Source of funding called **Connect Home Initiative** designed to fund internet service providers to extend existing infrastructure to rural, poor and underserved areas. He stated the County should explore this to see if the County could continue to provide the internet connectivity through this initiative.

Commissioner Holt said yes, and the County needed a Grant Writer for that. She stated the School Board Meeting should be ASAP, and applicants for broadband, she wanted to see all of the applications and said get started. She further stated she was worried about employees and the jobs they would not be able to do with the COVID numbers going up.

Chair Viegbesie said as far as meeting with the School Board, he told them it was urgent in regards to the School meeting with the Commission, if for nothing else but to collaborate. He asked also to work with scheduling meeting with school.

Commissioner Taylor asked Integrity how soon the portal would be available for business and residential.

Mr. Yates said Integrity was ready to go when the County gave the go ahead to do so and a reasonable day would be next Monday.

Commissioner Taylor said the numbers were all in now. She asked for the website and a clean copy and stated the PIO would need the info as well.

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Mr. Yates said that would be arranged with Dr. Grant. He said he would send the email portal link to the BOCC to look at and make sure it ran smooth. He further stated Frederica would be available to help in person and they would also test before it went live.

Chair Viegbesie said the PIO needed to be involved because she would be doing the marketing.

Commissioner Morgan asked if the agendaed items were completed and Chair Viegbesie stated yes.

Commissioner Holt asked if the Portal would be for business and that large business to small business ratio was not discussed. She thought it was very important to get out and get mom and pop businesses to see the County had this CARES Money. She suggested to put flyers out.

Ms. Steele said the SHIP application was on website. She stated they would notify churches and clarified the application process would start on August 14th. She further stated business and churches would be made aware.

Chair Viegbesie suggested it was put on the radio and in local papers that the process had started.

5. Adjourn

Chair Viegbesie called the meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

ANTHONY O. VIEGBESIE, PH. D., Chairman

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk