


**AT A FY 2020/2021 BUDGET WORKSHOP OF  
THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON  
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020 AT 4:00 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 – appeared remotely**  
                  **Sherrie Taylor, District 5– arrived at 4:17 pm**  
                  **Eric Hinson, District 1 - appeared remotely**  
                  **Jeff Price, Sr. Management Budget Analyst**  
                  **Dr. Henry Grant, Interim County Administrator**  
                  **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                  **Beth Bruner, Deputy Clerk**

**These meetings are being held virtually in accordance with the Governor’s Executive Order No. 20-69 as extended by Executive Order No. 20-179.**

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

 At 4:03 Chair Viegbesie welcomed everyone to the workshop asked everyone to bow their heads in prayer and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

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

Public comment of the meeting should be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until noon on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 in order to allow sufficient time for provisions to the Gadsden County Commission prior to the meeting. Any comments submitted after this time will be accepted and included as part of the official record of the meeting.

None were had

**General Business**

**1. Overview**

(Henry G. Grant, Ph.D., Interim County Administrator/Jeff Price, Sr. Management & Budget Analyst)


Dr. Grant introduced the above item and asked Mr. Price to give an overview.

Mr. Price gave an overview:

He stated page 1 was revenues and it was a tough year. The County lost revenues but not as bad as was thought. He said page 2 and 3 changed the most, they were the departmental budgets and had a 3% cut across the board. Page 4 were changes based on discussions at the last budget meeting. He said there were new positions being added to the staff, a 3% across the board, reduction for the BOCC departments and he was looking for sources of revenue for projects coming up and provided a 2% raise for staff. He stated page 5 was the overall budget for the entire County and all departments. He then said he was open to questions.


**2. Board Discussion**

(Board of County Commissioners)

 Commissioner Morgan said he did not get the information in time to review it. He asked how many positions were being added. Mr. Price answered eight. Commissioner Morgan confirmed adding 8 positions, giving a 2% pay raise and taking a 3% cut across the board. Mr. Price said that was correct.


Chair Viegbesie asked what about the Constitutionals. Commissioner Morgan said those particular budgets were their own and did not matter to this budget meeting. He said he did not understand how more people would be hired and raises given when there would be a 3% cut across the board. He had a rundown list but said he would listen for now.


Chair Viegbesie confirmed the positions being added were; 3- Public Works, 1- IT Tech, 1- Custodian, 2- Parks and Rec, 1- Fiscal Tech, 1- Elders Affairs Coordinator and Mr. Price agreed.

 Commissioner Morgan asked if the Board was adding 8 staff or deleting some positions and replacing them with different positions. Mr. Price answered adding new positions.


Chair Viegbesie asked if the Budget was balanced with all the changes made and Mr. Price answered yes.

Commissioner Morgan asked if there would be any borrowing from the General Fund to balance the budget and Mr. Price said no.

 Chair Viegbesie asked what was left in the General Fund. Mr. Price said \$3.2 Million that was discussed at the last meeting.

 Commissioner Holt asked what the shortage was of \$1.8 Million discussed last week in an email from the Clerk and how was it filled. Mr. Price answered during individual meetings it was taken down to \$1.3 Million and with across the board cut of 3% and on the major projects, they were able to locate other revenue sources.

Commissioner Holt asked what changed. Mr. Price said the 3% cut across the board and large projects like Cell towers, Pat Thomas Park, Concord Fire Dept, Havana EMS, Massey Building were looking for other funding sources. Commissioner Holt asked if they were changed, where were the numbers showing that.


 Commissioner Holt asked what was happening with Pat Thomas Park and Mr. Price said it would be funded by FEMA, Concord Fire Department \$50,000 was from HUD as well as HUD funding for Havana EMS, and the Massey Building would have an insurance reimbursement.

Commissioner Holt said the Massey Building insurance was \$67,000 and that was not enough to fix it.

Mr. Price said there were other insurance proceeds that would be available for the Massey Building.


Chair Viegbesie asked if the County had an umbrella policy and if that was why it could use money from other facility claims to fix any facility the County owned.

Attorney Knowles stated he remembered Mr. Meeks said it was okay. Mr. Knowles thought it should be used for what it was given for and thought the insurance company gave a different opinion.

 Dr. Grant asked Mr. Meeks to explain.

Mr. Meeks said he did not have a letter but had spoken to Pat Thomas Insurance and they said it was okay to spend the money anywhere as long as the original claim was fixed because they would not reinsure again for that amount.


Commissioner Holt told Mr. Meeks he needed a letter stating that from the insurance company and Mr. Meeks stated he would get that and the Massy Building had a proposal to fix damage and it was less than \$150,000 and Commissioner Holt said it should be.

 Commissioner Holt told Mr. Price the Board needed to see the items with numbers and where it was taken from. She asked how \$1.3 Million went to \$0.

Mr. Price said major projects found other sources of revenue, 3% cut across the board and the cell tower number were changing, it was \$450,000 at the last meeting and the bid was open for just over \$200,000 and it may not need to be financed after all.

Commissioner Holt spoke to Dr. Grant and said with the 3% decrease and 2% raise with no numbers being provided was concerning and asked about the Constitutionals, and why they did not have an across the board cut.


Dr. Grant said they had just decided not to. He said there were items and amounts taken out and they were; Pat Thomas Park was \$250,000, Cell Towers was \$450,000, Havana EMS was \$200,000, Concord Fire Department was \$150,000, Massey Building \$200,000 and the 3% cut was \$938,000.

 Commissioner Holt asked if the positions at Public Works and in IT were cut and Dr. Grant said no, they were not cut. Commissioner Holt asked what the 2% raise would cost. Commissioner Morgan answered the raise would be \$162,000.

Commissioner Holt asked what the positions up top were and asked if the Manager and Grant Writer positions were still in the budget. Commissioner Morgan asked if the Elders Affairs Coordinator and Grant Writer were still in the Budget and Dr. Grant said yes.


Commissioner Morgan asked if the Quincy Shuttle was still funded for \$30,000 and Mr. Price said yes it was. Commissioner Morgan asked how much the City of Quincy was paying. Mr. Price answered none at the moment.

Morgan asked if the Summer Youth Program was getting \$100,000 and Mr. Price answered minus the 3%, yes.


 Commissioner Morgan said a 3% cut and giving away \$30,000 for a shuttle service makes no sense and Quincy should pay 50% of the shuttle and he suggested to take that approach and that was how he would put it in the Budget.


Chair Viegbesie said that was a good point. The Board had talked about the shuttle at the workshops and how no municipalities paid anything towards the shuttle. He stated the County should write a letter to the City of Quincy telling them the County needed help with the burden of the Shuttle.


Commissioner Holt asked Mr. Price for the numbers from Public Works. Mr. Price said it was approximately \$400,000 for the eight extra staff and Commissioner Holt asked for the information to be listed in the columns with a total. She wanted the list before the next meeting.

 Commissioner Holt said if she had to look at anything else, the County needed roads cleaned up. She asked about page 2 where it said "Hospital staff not needed" and she asked why. Mr. Price said it was grounds maintenance the County did not have to do as much with the new lease. Commissioner Holt again asked for notes to the side.

Commissioner Holt, concerning Extension Services, asked Dr. Grant why the reduction and he stated there would be no renting next door anymore. Commissioner Holt asked for clarity on the Extension Services so they would not have to scramble to get them back if they were needed. She asked about Veterans Services being down by \$12,579, and Dr. Grant said two part time drivers went to one full time. Commissioner Holt said she wanted to make sure the Veterans were getting to the doctor.


 Commissioner Holt stated the Insurance Company said the County had to fix buildings or they would not insure them and she thought the contract needed to be put out for bid.

 Commissioner Hinson said giving an illusion created confusion, saying cutting the budget by 2% but 2020 to 2021 the County Building was increased by \$303,000 along with other things. He further stated the County did need some staff. If the BOCC got the variance straight first, then the Budget could be talked about, and staff may be able to get a 5% raise and they deserved it.

 Chair Viegbesie asked to put in the variance, what the variance reflected as to a plus or minus to give a better picture of whether or not there was a decrease in the overall estimated budget for FY 2020/2021. He asked that be provided with the numbers for the next meeting. He asked, concerning new staff, if the \$47,000 was for the same custodian as on page 4 and Dr. Grant said it would be. Chair Viegbesie continued asking if the two Parks and Recreation staff and the \$274,362 were for the same staff listed on page 4 along with the retirement payment and Mr. Price answered, yes. Chair Viegbesie stated page 4 was reflected on page 2 and asked for it to be in better form.

Commissioner Hinson thought the BOCC should look at every department because \$13,000 was taken from Jail Maintenance and he asked why money was taken from


the jail when the most COVID cases were in the jail. He thought the Board should be going column by column and talking about each of them.


 Commissioner Holt also wanted definitions in columns. She asked for the increase to County Buildings be listed and emailed to the Commissioners early. She asked if there were any projections as what could be done to make things run better, like the Cell Tower on page 2 and 4 being the same. Mr. Price answered, in part. He said since he thought the County was financing a tower there was a \$62,000 payment that was included in the \$297,000 but that may change. Commissioner Holt asked for clarity on the \$297,000. Chair Viegbesie asked if the Cell Tower amount was the change order. Dr. Grant said no, the figure Commissioner Holt was talking about was the figure that was already being paid plus if the BOCC had taken the Motorola bid for \$62,000, it would have made the amount shown.

Chair Viegbesie said putting the \$450,000 cell tower as FY20/21 Budget as it was being paid in one lump sum and actually, it would be \$62,000 annually and needed to be added. He said it was not paid in one fiscal year. He said the bid was open for the Cell Towers.

Commissioner Holt asked how many towers.  
Dr. Grant stated it was 3 towers.  
Commissioner Holt asked how many towers did the \$297,000 represent.


Mr. Meeks said leases on the towers were \$35,000 per year, plus a payment for equipment purchased as well as the new tower and dispatch equipment that had been financed and he thought it was around \$155,000. Commissioner Holt asked Mr. Meeks for a document showing the numbers so if projects were increased or decreased, the BOCC could have clarity and Mr. Meeks said he would get that together.

 Commissioner Morgan asked if the completion of the communication system was included in the budget.  
Dr. Grant said yes, it was included as if it was going to be financed, but what was not included was if it had to be purchased.

 Commissioner Holt asked how many staff were in Parks and Rec right now.  
Dr. Grant answered two and one volunteer and they wanted to hire two more.

Commissioner Holt stated Medicaid was something to lobby to get the County's portion down. She asked what the New Staff under the Administrator was for and Dr. Grant answered for the Elders Affairs Coordinator.


Commissioner Hinson said he thought the board wanted to increase the County Administrator salary. He stated Havana just gave their City Administrator a 5-10% raise and he made close to \$100,000 now and the County Administrator was close to that but his position was the most intense in the County. He thought the increase was for the County Administrator. He said the County needed to be equivalent to counties our size. He said there was no reason the County Administrator was making less than the City Administrator. He further stated the Board should take care of Public Works and the County Administrator.

 Chair Viegbesie said the Board had agreed to increase the County Administrator's salary to \$125,000. He asked Mr. Price the County Administrator and Assistant Administrator's salary w/o benefits.

Mr. Price said, from memory, the County Administrator was \$125,000 and the Assistant was \$90,000.

Commissioner Hinson said he did not want to keep losing the County Administrator or the Assistant. He stated the last County Administrator took a job as Assistant County Administrator and he made more as an assistant somewhere else than he did as the Administrator in Gadsden County. He suggested to look at other counties and pay more because there was more responsibility with COVID-19 and the Hurricanes.

Chair Viegbesie said this County's Budget was a lot less than it was where the previous Administrator went, but he agreed the pay should be comparable. He further stated the Commissioners need to treat the County Administrator like they were valuable and the Commissioners wanted to retain them. He said monetary compensation was good but relationship harmony was better for retention.

 Commissioner Taylor said she compared what was said last time and what was presented. She stated the Commission agreed the B&G Club would not be funded this fiscal year and the Board agreed to set that money aside because they were unsure if there would be an after-school program. She stated at this time, there should be no Elder Affairs Coordinator, a separate and new department for the PIO was not necessary at this time, she asked to hold Special Projects at bay until after COVID. She could not understand \$274,000 for a retirement and new staff and thought the County did not need two Parks and Rec people at this time. She asked if the Fiscal Tech was Dr. Grant's employee and in the Budget Department and Dr. Grant said yes. Commissioner Taylor said the Cell Towers were needed for communication. She asked why so much (\$358,000) to move to a different location for the Ambulance and an Attorney increase of \$19,000. She asked if it could be held off until the County had a rebound. She suggested to do a 7% cut with no raises. She suggested instead to come back in January and give a 3% increase. She asked if the CRA in Quincy was being funded for 20/21 and asked if the Board could do that because the money was earmarked and set aside.

Commissioner Morgan said the County was a passthrough for the CRA money.

Mr. Price said on page 1, the parentheses meant there was a reduction in what was received.

Commissioner Taylor asked Mr. Price if he said the Budget was balanced with no reserve and Mr. Price said correct. He stated there was \$3.2 Million in Reserve. She wanted to see it higher because eventually the revenue would decline and the expenses would out-grow the General Revenue. She thought there were meetings after Board Meetings because the B&G Club money was back in the Budget when it was stated at the last meeting it would not be. She further stated the law firm should go back to its original baseline, with no raise in the first year. Concerning Planning and Zoning, she asked why they needed \$69,000 for Professional Services and Land Development.


 Commissioner Morgan said each Commissioner had an opportunity to have an individual meeting with the County Administrator, he asked if all 5 Commissioners did.


Commissioner Morgan did, Commissioner Taylor did not and Chair Viegbesie said he did as well. Regarding the Administrator and Assistant Administrator salary, he recommended to make a pay scale range for both positions because it depended on the experience the Board was asking people in those positions to come in with, and there was typically a multi-year contract and there were problems with that. He further stated this would be a way for them to grow into the salary and it was how to retain good quality employees as well as a way to get out of the agreement if the County did not have the person who was producing at the level needed.

Commissioner Hinson said he agreed with Commissioner Morgan. He asked why there was an EMS location move for \$358,510, he asked why and where they were moving and where the money came from.

Dr. Grant said the EMS was transitioning to the Health Department portion where there was a Doctor Office and a Dentist, and EMS needed to refurbish to an EMS Center.

Commissioner Hinson said he was big on EMS and lived in Havana. He said not everyone could wait on EMS. He asked to find another space for a trailer for EMS. He stated it would be hard to bring EMS back if they got rid of it. He said District 1 and 2 were an aging community and that was why he voted for 4 ambulances. He said the Board needed to get \$60,000 to get a trailer or build on a spot for \$100,000. He could not accept moving the EMS.

 Chair Viegbesie said Havana EMS was the location that Havana was planning on building the new police department and they had asked for some money for that and stated the move was temporary.

 Commissioner Taylor stated the previous Assistant County Administrator, Arthur Lawson was head of HR and Assistant County Administrator. She further stated it was not a good time to bring in an Assistant County Administrator or County Administrator. She said new staff had been added and they could help the County Administrator. She asked about the Health Department and for EMS to go to the Health Department and did not know which meeting the EMS move was decided. Dr. Grant answered it was before he started. She said she did not remember discussing the EMS move. She said she needed to know what was going on in Havana if they were asking to get money. She asked Dr. Grant if he received a request from Havana City Council and if they were in the Budget.

Dr. Grant said yes, but the County was looking for other funding.


Chair Viegbesie said in regards to moving EMS to the County Health Building, it came after Hurricane Michael destroyed the EMS building.


Commissioner Taylor said that was over 2 years ago and they had since moved to the hospital. Dr. Grant said they were partly there. Commissioner Taylor said the County could not afford to move them and the County needed EMS up and running now. She asked how long it would be. She stated she needed a conversation with Havana and requested a letter from Havana with the plans of the Police Department and EMS in the same building and the timeline and also if they would keep EMS nearby the location.


 Chair Viegbesie asked Dr. Grant to get that letter from Havana.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought other Commissioners talked to some people from the town of Havana. He said he had not been told about moving the EMS. He said the move would paralyze Havana. He asked again to buy a spot in Havana and build for EMS. He said he did not want a letter, he wanted to take care of citizens. He stated the County was spending \$558,000 and would not own anything.

Chair Viegbesie said the money was in the budget. He said Commissioner Hinson's suggestions would be a path. He asked the County Administrator to look into Commissioner Hinson's suggestions and said as long as it was in the Budget it could be used.

 Commissioner Taylor said Commissioner Hinson made a powerful point. She said the County owned the building EMS was moving into and it was sad she had to go through Chair Viegbesie to ask Dr. Grant, in order to get anywhere when she had just as much power as anyone around the dais as far as the Commission. She stated giving the County Administrator the power would not get the County communication services online.

 Commissioner Holt said the people listening had no idea what they were talking about and asked Chair Viegbesie to tell the people listening what was going on.

 Chair Viegbesie said the EMS Building in Havana had a mobile home and it was falling apart, there was 1 bed, 1 room, and 1 little bathroom which was not being used by the workers. They were asking for an upgrade. He said Havana reached out to the previous County Administrator wanting an Intergovernmental agreement to give the County a space for EMS. He further stated Dr. Grant was talking about the EMS in Quincy by the Hospital. He stressed the fact that Havana EMS was not moving and the Board was working on improving EMS in all of Gadsden County.

Commissioner Taylor said she need clarification and stated the location was incorrect. She said it was not the Jesse Furlow Building, it was the County Health Department.

Chair Viegbesie suggested to drive by the Hospital, and that was where EMS was. He said one part was shared with the Health Department and the other part was EMS.

 Commissioner Holt asked if there was funding for it.

Dr. Grant said it was taken out because they found a different funding source.

Commissioner Holt said the County could not do without an Assistant Manager and said it was a must. She also said the County needed a PIO to get information out. She stated someone had to track every penny and turn things in on time. She thought the BOCC may need another Budget Workshop but was not sure there would be time. She said the County needed an Elderly Affairs Coordinator to make sure elders had what they needed.

 Dr. Viegbesie asked when the First Public Hearing was and Dr. Grant said September 10, 2020.

Commissioner Holt said the EMS brought the issue to the board.



Commissioner Taylor said it was bought to the Board and then EMS moved to the Hospital. With regards to the PIO, she was saying do not make a new department and that position should be under the County Administrator. She agreed the Grant Writer was needed but the Assistant Director position was empty for over a year and thought maybe someone could multitask. She did not want another Workshop and did not think there was a need for Elders Affairs coordinator for now, maybe later.

 Chair Viegbesie said the first Public Budget Hearing was Thursday September 10<sup>th</sup> and the second would be September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner Holt asked if a line item was not due, could it be pulled out concerning organizations, even if they were separate from the County, organizations could not draw from them until the Board released them.

Dr. Viegbesie said he thought the Board decided it would be set aside in case there was a need for them to get the funding.

Commissioner Taylor said it should go into the Reserve and stay there.

**Adjourn**

Chair Viegbesie called the meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**ANTHONY O. VIEGBEISE, PH.D., Chair**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**