

AT A FIRST BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING OF THE
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN
AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON SEPTEMBER
10, 2020 AT 6:00 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
Eric Hinson, District 1 – appeared remotely

Staff: Dr. Henry Grant, Interim County Administrator
Jeff Price, Sr. Management Budget Analyst
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, Pledge of Allegiance

At 6:06 pm, with a quorum present, Chair Viegbesie welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked for heads to be bowed in silent prayer followed by leading in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Amendments and Approval of Agenda

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH A SECOND BY CHAIR VIEGBESIE.

THE BOARD VOTED 3-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Commissioner Morgan called in to the meeting and asked to have the panelist invite sent to him again and he would join via Zoom.

Citizens to be Heard on Non- Agenda Items (3 Minute Limit)

Public comment of the meeting should be submitted via email to 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. Budget Overview and Discussion (Henry G. Grant, Ph.D., Interim County Administrator)
Dr. Grant stated tonight was the first of two required Public Hearings on the FY 20/21 Budget.

Public Hearings

2. First Budget Public Hearing for Adoption of tentative Millage Rate

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ADOPTION OF THE TENTATIVE FY 2020/2021 COUNTYWIDE MILLAGE RATE OF 8.9064 WITH A SECOND BY COMMISSIONER MORGAN.

THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE.

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

MOTION PASSED 5-0

3. Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2020/2021 (Henry G. Grant, Ph.D., Interim County Administrator)

COMMISSIONER MORGAN MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE TENTATIVE FY 2020/2021 COUNTYWIDE BUDGET WITH A SECOND BY CHAIR VIEGBESIE.

Commission Taylor had a question. She asked if the Budget was being adopted with all of the new positions that were discussed and was \$1.8 Million short.

Commissioner Morgan answered, as presented to the Board as of today.

Chair Viegbesie said he saw nothing that would point him to the \$1.8 Million short.

Commissioner Taylor said it was what the Clerk had emailed, but now was balanced. She said she was not in favor of the new positions being added on and some of the expenditures that were asked to be incurred. She further stated in less than two, three years at the most, the County would not be able to support this kind of Budget.

Commissioner Holt said with the virus and deaths, to push the Massey Building to get Healthcare Providers in as quickly as possible. She asked about the insurance proceeds and if a letter was obtained from them as she asked for at the last meeting.

Attorney Knowles did not think he was supposed to contact the Insurance Company.

Chair Viegbesie said he thought the Board asked if the County had a blanket policy where the money from a claim could be used on other projects and the Massey Building was top priority.

Dr. Grant said he did not know he needed to bring it to this meeting.

Commissioner Holt said the Board needed something from the Insurance Company at this meeting.

Dr. Grant said it was coming, but he had not checked before he came to the meeting and asked Mr. Meeks if he had received the letter.

Mr. Meeks said the letter was not ready. He stated the Insurance Company was having their attorney look it over because they had not had this request before. He said he had last checked at 4:00 pm.

Commissioner Holt asked if the Insurance Company said no, where would money come from.

Mr. Meeks said the County needed \$58,000 to complete with the guarantee maximum proposal. He said he had talked to Mr. Price and that could be budgeted in the next fiscal budget.

Commissioner Holt asked who came up with that number.

Mr. Meeks said there were 3-4 Construction managers and he went to CSI Construction and they went out and looked at FEMA and Insurance reports as well as the buildings and they brought someone who did structural work to get quotes.

Commissioner Holt said normally, it would take an Insurance Company just a few minutes to get that information emailed. She said they knew the type of policy they had. She stated the item needed to be bid out and would add \$200,000 and the County had \$67,000 on that bid.

Dr. Grant stated the cost of the repairs would be \$122,000. Commissioner Holt stated it was supposed to be half and that was \$66,000 and they Board needed to know at this meeting what the Insurance Company had to say.

Chair Viegbesie said he thought the need for the response should have been impressed upon Pat Thomas Insurance because the County needed that today. If the Board assumed that they were right, the County could use the money.

Commissioner Holt said that was why an insurance contract should be bid. She said get the insurance contract if they could not send an email. Also, the last in-house estimate if there was in-house funding, the County could have opinions. She did not know how it would be fixed now. She further stated anything with healthcare should be at the top of the agenda during a pandemic. She further asked if the Budget included the Assistant Manager, Grant Writer, and the people the County needed to bring in revenue and Dr. Grant said yes. Commissioner Holt stated the County needed an Accounting Firm to look over the Budget for assurance.

Chair Viegbesie said the need for an Accounting Firm should be considered in the future to work with the Budget Department.

Commissioner Holt said the Budget Director set the Budget and the Assistant did what the Budget Director told them. She stated she was worried.

Commissioner Taylor said she would vote against the item for four reasons; She did not think there should be a PIO Department at this time, no Assistant Manager at this time, no Elder Affair Coordinator at this time and to not increase the Attorney fees \$25,000 at this time. She stated she was pleased with Mr. Price and thanked him. Commissioner Taylor also said no B&G Club at this time.

Dr. Grant said the B&G Club was not included.

Chair Viegbesie stated the money for the B&G Club was in Reserve just in case.

Commissioner Morgan stated he had asked the Administrator and was told the B&G Club was funded at \$93,301.

Dr. Grant said it was not budgeted, but put in Reserve with the other Non-Profits so later, if the Commissioners wanted them funded it was there.

Commissioner Morgan said that was a game changer and he was not voting yes if it was not in the Budget.

COMMISSIONER MORGAN WITHDREW HIS MOTION. CHAIR VIEGBESIE WITHDREW HIS SECOND.

Commissioner Holt said everything was the same except all Non-Profits moved to the Reserve except Economic Development.

Commissioner Morgan asked what the Administrator was referring to as the Reserve. Dr. Grant said where he was instructed to put the Non-Profits so if the Commission decided to do anything later, the money would be there and the Non-Profit requests were put in with the Reserve funds.

Commissioner Morgan asked if the Board were to have funded each of those items, would the BOCC be pulling any money out of Fund Balance to balance this proposed Budget or not.

Dr. Grant answered no. Commissioner Morgan asked why they could not be assigned now and Dr. Grant answered because the Board instructions were to hold back on them.

Chair Viegbesie said he did not know if Non-Profits would be needed with the pandemic. He said when time came and school was open, the money was there. He further stated Non-Profit money was in the Budget and was in the \$189,946 on the expenditure side.

Commissioner Morgan said organizations were unable to make their own Budget if they did not know the funding was going to be there.

Chair Viegbesie said if direction was to break the \$189,946 back down in the amounts to be funded and the money could be given.

Commissioner Holt said she had no problem with the money being in Reserve.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MOVED APPROVAL OF THE TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR 2020/2021 COUNTYWIDE BUDGET, AS PRESENTED, WITH A SECOND FROM CHAIR VIEGBESIE.

THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY ROLL CALL VOTE NOT TO APPROVE.

COMMISSIONER HINSON	NO
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	NO
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	NO
COMMISSIONER HOLT	YES
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	YES

MOTION FAILED 3-2

Chair Viegbesie told the Commissioners they had to work on the Budget for approval at the next Hearing.

Commissioner Holt stated there could be other motions made.

COMMISSIONER MORGAN MOVED APPROVAL OF THE TENTATIVE FY 2020/2021 COUNTYWIDE BUDGET WITH CHANGES OF THE MONEY IN RESERVE TO BE BUDGETED FOR THE NON-PROFITS WITH A SECOND BY CHAIR VIEGBESIE.

Commissioner Holt had a question.

Commissioner Holt asked what was the total for Non- Profits.

Mr. Price answered \$93,000 for B&G Club and approximately \$40,000 for the others, no more than \$50,000.

Mr. Knowles said a full number was needed for approval.

Commissioner Holt asked if in a motion it said to include Non-Profits, would the exact number be needed.

Mr. Knowles asked for Commissioner Morgan to clarify which Non-Profits and for how much.

Commissioner Holt stated it would have to be Non-Profits that were already approved, and the amounts that were already approved.

Attorney Knowles asked if they were listed in the Budget and Chair Viegbesie said no. It was in the last Budget Workshop and was broken down as to what went to North Florida Education Development among other agencies.

Commissioner Holt said she would not vote yes because if it was held in Reserve and no one was moving anyway, and groups were not getting together, it did not need to go in the Budget, but three Commissioners might.

Commissioner Hinson asked Chair Viegbesie what his reason was for voting for B&G Club. He stated as soon as it was voted on, a check had to be written. He asked Chair Viegbesie to persuade him to vote for the B&G Club because kids were not benefiting from it at all.

Chair Viegbesie said the B&G Club and other programs, because of the condition of the school systems and the educational method of remote learning, there would be no need right now and that was why the recommendation of staff was all the money be put into Reserve under expenditures.

Commissioner Taylor interrupted and told Chair Viegbesie that Commissioner Hinson wanted to know why the Chair was voting for the B&G Club now.

Chair Viegbesie stated when school started and the County needed services from the B&G Club, the money would be ready.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought Commissioner Morgan was saying to take the money for the Non-Profits out of Reserve and make the vote on that. He stated again, once approved a check would have to be cut. Commissioner Morgan said that was not correct. Commissioner Hinson stated if it was kept in Reserve and things started to clear up, they would get support but to just fund them would include writing them a check after approval.

Commissioner Morgan said the Board was creating a Budget for the upcoming year and did not know what services would look like in 2021. The Board was just budgeting a certain amount for that group and it did not mean a check would be cut October 1. He stated the Board had yet to see what services and how they would provide for the children. He further stated the Board did not have to spend just because it was budgeted. If the Non-Profit was not providing services, he recommended not spending a dime of the money. He was saying to go ahead and identify those services so the organization could understand what was available if they did provide services rendered in the County.

Commissioner Holt said it would work the same way if the money was in Reserve. She said the Board decided at the last Public meeting where the money would go. She further stated if the BOCC decided not to move the money until January 1, the Board could get a date on it and it did not have to move from the Budget or the Reserve.

Commissioner Taylor asked why entertain a \$100,000 program when it would not be running. She suggested the Board come back in January and adjust. She further stated to fund the Non-Profits now was not fiscally responsible.

Commissioner Morgan reminded the Board they were just budgeting items, and they were not having to spend the money in each line item.

THE BOAD VOTED 3-2 BY ROLL CALL VOTE TO NOT APPROVE.

COMMISSIONER HINSON	NO
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	NO
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	YES
COMMISSIONER HOLT	NO
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	YES

MOTION FAILED 3-2

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE 2020/2021 TENTATIVE BUDGET WITH A SECOND BY CHAIR VIEGBESIE.

THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY ROLL CALL VOTE TO NOT APPROVE.

COMMISSIONER HINSON	NO
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	NO
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	NO
COMMISSIONER HOLT	YES
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	YES

MOTION FAILED 3-2

Chair Viegbesie said he thought it would be better for the Board to give staff direction as what to do with the balanced Budget so when the Board came back or voted, it would be done.

Commissioner Taylor said she wanted to see the item move and be done. Regarding the new position and new salary, if other Commissioners agreed to bring them on January 1, 2021 when the new Revenue was in, she would support the Budget. She said she liked keeping the money in Reserve, but asked the Commissioners to let COVID pass before extra expenses were incurred, she would then support a motion. She further stated, let them stay in the Budget but to not start deducting the line items until January 1, 2021 and she would support that.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE TENTATIVE 2020/2021 COUNTYWIDE BUDGET WITH CHANGES BEING THE LINE ITEM FOR THE NEW

POSITIONS AND NEW SALARY WOULD STAY IN AND JANUARY 1, 2021 THE BOARD WOULD COME BACK AND FUND THEM FOR THE REMAINING FISCAL YEAR, DO NOT TAKE POSITIONS AWAY, NON- PROFIT MONEY INTO RESERVE AND THAT WOULD COVER THE NON-PROFITS ONCE COVID WAS GONE WITH A SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HINSON.

Commissioner Holt asked if the new positions include the Assistant Manager. Commissioner Taylor said yes, she said all of them.

Commissioner Holt stated the Assistant Manager was a must have.

Commissioner Taylor said it was only for two months.

Commissioner Holt said 4 managers had been here and she had told them if they got sick or something happened, the County must continue. She stated there must be help on the County's behalf with a Grant Writer. The BOCC was contracting out for programs but had no management on the County's behalf. She further stated the County needed a Grant Writer, Assistant Manager and also a Grants Coordinator. She said the County had gone without an Assistant Manager and the departments started fighting each other and the public.

Commissioner Taylor said it would take time to advertise for the position and start work January 1, 2021. She further stated Integrity had a responsibility for FEMA and HUD. She said Integrity would take care of the County at no further expense and the County could get a Grant Writer to start on January 1, 2021.

Chair Viegbesie understood the Commission did not have authority to hire an Assistant Administrator, the Board only hired the Attorney and the County Administrator. The County Administrator hired the Assistant Administrator. He said the Board needed to hire an Administrator and impress upon them the need to hire an Assistant. He further stated the Board should not discuss an Assistant because it was out of their jurisdiction.

Commissioner Taylor said Chair Viegbesie's comment was incorrect and she was discussing how to fund the position.

Commissioner Holt said Public Works needed people and that was 2 staff members.

Commissioner Taylor said she was talking about the PIO Department, Assistant Manager, Elders Affairs Coordinator, \$25,000 for the Attorney and \$93,000 for B&G Club until January 1, 2021.

THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY ROLL CALL VOTE TO NOT APPROVE.

COMMISSIONER HINSON	YES
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	YES

COMMISSIONER MORGAN	NO
COMMISSIONER HOLT	NO
CHAIR VIEGBESIE	NO

MOTION FAILED 3-2

Commissioner Morgan said the mission was to adopt a Tentative FY Budget and positions did not matter.

Chair Viegbesie said if the Commissioners could not arrive at an agreement, they needed to give staff direction.

Commissioner Hinson asked how much money the County had pre and post Hurricane Michael so he could make a better decision.

Chair Viegbesie said that request would have to be researched.

Commissioner Hinson said it was a simple question and everything should be year to date and easy to pull up on the computer.

Dr. Grant said they did not have the numbers.

Mr. Price said he did not have the data before him, but by memory, before the storm there was approximately \$4.9 Million in Reserve and after it was down to \$3.9 Million. he stated the County had not received any money from Hurricane Michael yet but had an obligation from FEMA for about \$700,000 to come back to the County.

Commissioner Hinson asked what the lowest Reserve was at.

Mr. Price said he thought it was about \$3.5 Million.

Chair Viegbesie thought it was at \$2.7 Million at one point.

Mr. Price said the budget and actual was different.

Commissioner Taylor asked concerning the \$1.8 Million short the Clerk sent an email about, where did that come from so it did not come from Reserve.

Mr. Price said it was from taking 3% out of all operating departments and rearranged funding sources for other projects coming in using HUD and FEMA.

Commissioner Taylor asked Mr. Price if he was saying that he balanced the Budget off of possible money. She said FEMA and HUD were possible money and you could not balance the Budget off of Competitive Funds.

Mr. Price answered yes and Commissioner Taylor said that was illegal.

Chair Viegbesie stepped out at 7:12 pm

Commissioner Morgan said he saw some items like Pat Thomas Park, which would use FEMA dollars, were not included in the Budget.

Commissioner Taylor asked Mr. Price if funds for Pat Thomas Park, Havana EMS, and Concord Fire Department were in the Budget but based on a different funding source and Mr. Price said that was correct.

Commissioner Taylor told Commissioner Morgan the amount was in the Budget and based on a Competitive Funds.

Commissioner Morgan said he was told Pat Thomas Park was delayed and funded using FEMA dollars.

Mr. Price did not know if it was being delayed. He said they could be taken out of the Budget and he thought it should show in the Budget.

Vice Chair Holt said the \$1.2 Million for the projects, how did it affect the Budget if they were not funded until 2022-2023.

Chair Viegbesie returned at 7:15 pm

Mr. Price said it would not affect it because nothing was happening.

Commissioner Holt asked if in order to balance the Budget, the numbers were not included in the funding mechanism, only the Massey Building and Cell Towers, so the others were not used to balance the budget.

Mr. Knowles inquired if Commissioner Holt was asking if FEMA did not fund the Park, the County would not pay it.

Commissioner Holt said no, she was asking were the numbers used to balance the budget.

Dr. Grant said if the money did not come in, the project did not get done.

Commissioner Holt said right, so do not put the things in that may need FEMA or HUD funding. She stated the Board did not know about the Massey Building. She thought the BOCC needed another meeting.

Chair Viegbesie said the Commissioners could not agree.

Commissioner Holt said the Board needed comments from each Commissioner. She wanted the PIO and Asst Administrator in the Budget.

Mr. Knowles said the Board must approve a Tentative Budget and a Final Budget so the Board had to continue the meeting and come back and have the second meeting. He said the Tentative Budget had to be posted for citizens to see.

Chair Viegbesie said the Board was at an impasse and adjustments could be made before the Final Budget was approved.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE BUDGET AS STATED WITH THE INCLUSION OF THE PIO DEPARTMENT AND ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR POSITION. THE MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

Chair Viegbesie asked what about the other positions.

Commissioner Holt said she thought they were already in.

Commissioner Taylor said she had no problem with the positions but the Revenue did not allow for them at this time.

Dr. Grant wanted clarification on the motion because what Commissioner Holt was saying to add was already in the Budget.

Commissioner Holt said she was trying to compromise with Commissioner Taylor and use the two she thought were needed most.

Commissioner Taylor said she was trying to make sure Revenue could meet the positions so that in June or July of 2021, the positions were no longer affordable.

Chair Viegbesie said the Commissioners were saying the same thing from different angles.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021 WITH THE EXCEPTION OF BRINGING ON THE POSITION OF PIO DEPARTMENT, ASSISTANT MANAGER, ELDERS AFFAIR COORDINATOR, INCREASE FOR THE ATTORNEY AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020 AND THE NON- PROFIT WILL STAY IN THE RESERVE UNTIL THE BOARD NEEDS FOR IT TO BE BROUGHT OUT AND GIVEN TO THE NON-PROFITS THAT HAD SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED WITH A SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT.

THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE.

COMMISSIONER HINSON	NO
COMMISSIONER TAYLOR	YES
COMMISSIONER MORGAN	NO
COMMISSIONER HOLT	YES

CHAIR VIEGBESIE

YES

MOTION PASSED 3-2

Mr. Knowles said to look at Citizens to be Heard comments for the next meeting and said the Board may need to open chambers for citizens to come in one by one for comments.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought the Board needed an Emergency meeting about the CARES Act. He said the application was not Gadsden friendly and was hard for people to qualify.

Chair Viegbesie said it could be a part of a Friday meeting to make sure CARES Act Rules were being followed.

Commissioner Hinson said he did not want to mislead the citizens. He said the Commissioners made the rules and a 2-hour meeting with CARES was needed and not in a regular meeting because he was getting phone calls.

Commissioner Taylor said it could be done on Friday.

Commissioner Holt asked Dr. Grant to pull up the website and see the glitches complained about with Integrity. She asked the Commissioner if the County Building would be open and get people help. She stated some people were about to get put out.

Commissioner Morgan asked if the Board adopted all 3 options and Chair Viegbesie said yes.

Dr. Grant said the third item was for Staff to advertise for the next Public Budget Hearing.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VIEGBESIE DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:40 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

ANTHONY O. VIEGBESIE, PH.D., Chair

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk