

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON DECEMBER 15, 2020 AT 6:00
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**
 Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2
 Eric Hinson, District 1
 Kimblin NeSmith, District 3
 Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5
 Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
 Nicholas Thomas, Clerk of Court
 Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
 Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Holt asked for approval of the Agenda.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT AND APPROVE THE AGENDA AND
COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND.**

Mr. Dixon said there were two amendments, a Memorandum of Understanding between Gadsden County EMS and the Gadsden County Health Department for Joint Operations to administer COVID-19 vaccinations as Item 8a and Approve Funding Shifts to Amend the CARES Spending Plan as Item 8b.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN AMENDED HIS MOTION AND COMMISSIONER HINSON AMENDED HIS
SECOND TO ACCEPT THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO
APPROVE.**

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES

CONSENT

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AND
COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO
APPROVE.**

- 1. Ratification Memo**
- 2. Approval of Resolution for New Chairperson-Facsimile Stamp**
- 3. Approval of the FY 2021/22 Proposed Budget Calendar**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
 - July 21, 2020 Workshop**

- **July 31, 2020 Emergency Meeting**
- **August 12, 2020 Workshop**
- **September 15, 2020 Regular Meeting**

ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.

If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.
Chair Holt read aloud the COVID-19 statement.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

GENERAL BUSINESS

5. Approval of the Memorandum of Agreement with the State of Florida, Department of Economic Opportunity and Gadsden County

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated this was for Board approval of the Memorandum of Agreement with the State of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and Gadsden County.

COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON AMENDED HIS SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

6. Quincy Senior Services Roof Replacement

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented for approval of award for RFP No. 21-01 for a roof replacement of the Simon Scott Senior Services building to Southland Rowe Roofing, the lowest bidder.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

7. Confirmation of new Planning Commission Members

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for confirmation of three new and three re-appointed Planning Commissioners for the Planning Commission.

District One will be re-appointing Mr. William Chukes and Mr. Jeff Diekman;
District Three will be appointing Ms. Frances Brown and Mr. Wayne Williams; and
District 5 will be re-appointing Lori Bouie and appointing Reverend Dr. Joe Parramore.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HINSON, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

8. Approval of Emergency Fuel Pump Monitoring Systems Purchase with Tyson Petroleum Contractors, LLC

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the purchase for Fuel Pump Monitoring Systems.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

8a Memorandum of Understanding between EMS and Gadsden County Health Department (NO SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED)

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was an MOU delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine. He said there were four different MOU's.

COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if Mr. Dixon had a chance to look over the agreement and he stated yes. He asked if the County Attorney had a chance to review and Mr. Knowles responded no, but they met with Chief Maddox at EMS and this was fairly standard agreements from the State and nothing they would need to change. He said there was a need for the standard vaccination program and there were no concerns of the County Administrator and himself.

Commissioner NeSmith asked when the vaccinations would start. Mr. Dixon said his understanding was the vaccine would not be received until January and would probably be for first responders, front-line workers and senior citizens first. Mr. Knowles explained this would deal with all vaccinations moving forward.

CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

8b Approve Funding Shifts to Amend the Gadsden County CARES Spend Plan

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval to amend the CARES Program spending plan. He added they were of the opinion that they would not be able to do the hospital line item and this was an attempt to move money into other programs they knew were functional.

Frederica Hamilton, Integrity Group, appeared before the Board and stated it was for Board approval to adjust the Gadsden County CARES Program Spending Plan and gave a breakdown of the amounts to be amended. Adjustments would increase the County Public Health Line item by \$379,257 from \$1,225,058.82 to \$1,604,316.00; increase the Administration and Compliance line item by \$400,000.00 from \$395,000.00 to \$795,000.00.

Mr. Dixon said they knew there was only \$1 Million in the line item for broadband and was bad business to wait for grants that may or may not come. He said there was an agreement with a vendor and in the attempt to move money to set it up whether they chose to pay or not was not the problem. The problem was to make sure it was out there for them TO be able to do that, if they chose to. He said the other money was in a grant that may or may not come and it put the Board in a precarious situation that they signed a contract for X number of dollars and they had

not figured out where the money was coming from other than the grant they may or may not get.

Commissioner Hinson said other than the broadband, he thought they should move forward with broadband, but the remainder of the funding should go towards the citizens; half toward business and the other half to citizens. Some folks were having to move from their homes; people need money now. He added they needed to figure out a way to streamline and make the process easier for people to apply.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his position with regard to the procurement process for broadband had not changed. He said he firmly believed that whatever process they used, no matter how it was cut, would be a violation of CFR 200.323 and 200.326. He clarified that since this was going to be voted all in one, he would not be voting for this because he was not in support of the procurement process, not for the broadband services, just the procurement process.

Commissioner Green asked first, how many people have applied for the broadband services and been approved. Ms. Hamilton stated she did not have that information, 2) as they were moving money down, would they be able to discuss what they would like to do with the funding and wanted to look at how they could implement churches because they have been heavily impacted by the virus and they have bills that need to be paid and people were not able to give as they have in the past.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Ms. Hamilton if there was a provision in the CARES money to help what Commissioner Green just spoke of about funding non-profits, churches, etc.

Ms. Hamilton said that was at the discretion of the Board.

Mr. Dixon said he thought what the Commissioners were talking about, once they get past the December 30th deadline, they hoped to have a workshop and talk about the restraints that will be lifted and the new powers for the Board to decide locally where the funding would go. He thought they could do that in January once they draw money down.

Commissioner Holt said back with Hurricane Michael, they had communications down; had 17 emergencies when the internet was down and had deaths. She said they did everything from borrowing phones and Rep. Alexander got through to FAMU and the County was connected. She said broadband was needed, like it or not there will be another hurricane. She added they could not not have communication anymore. She added they had to have a situation in place. Holmes and Jackson County were running cable right now and was intending to go for G5's too. She added all they were currently talking about were hotspots. She said when everyone leaves, Integrity and everyone else, the people, including herself, would be stuck here. She asked what they were doing to help people. They were going to have to bite the bullet and get communication here. She said other money was coming, they knew it was coming from Congress. They could draw money down and get past December 30th and they could have this discussion again.

Commissioner Viegbesie said she was saying what he has been thinking. There was no-one on the commission that did not want broadband, the issue here was the procurement process. If

he understood what the Administrator said, if they were drawing down, they could now have a conversation on how the Board would spend or allocate the money, then why were they putting on paper what was being moved from where to what. Upon drawing down, what would they do, revert on what they were drawing down and what they were allocating to each of the projects and re-allocate the monies. He said upon drawing down everything, they could come back and discuss and prioritize these monies to provide the services the citizens want. He added then, they would not have hotspots sitting in a warehouse somewhere drawing dust.

Commissioner Green said he asked his question for a purpose, there seemed to be a lot of back and forth on something the Board has already approved. He added they could not be stagnated. He said the reason he asked how many people had applied, it seemed to be the dollar amount has become an issue. He added if they could find out how many people had applied; they would know what had been spent. He said it was hard to move money to the account if they did not have the number of people that had requested the devices.

Chair Holt said in order to get everything they were to get, that was what they had to do; move on it in order to get it. She said they needed to make sure they could get the people the service.

Ms. Hamilton said for them to be mindful of the December 30th deadline and the County had already signed a contract with the vendor for that dollar amount.

Mr. Thomas said in terms of the money, he wanted to make it clear in the CARES Act fund, there was about \$300,000.00 and of the \$4.3 Million that have been submitted to do drawdown, so far approximately \$495,000 of that has been approved. This week they will be cutting checks for small businesses, residents and municipalities, about \$700,000 that will cover what they currently have in the CARES Fund and then there is a cash flow issue until they approve and send the rest of the money to the County. He said they have not been sent any of the Phase 3 money.

Ms. Hamilton added from Clerk's office, an additional \$2.7 Million has been submitted in documentation because her understanding to the County based on the Florida Division of Emergency Management staff, there are counties in the State that did not partake in the program. At the right time, that pot of money will open up to other counties.

Commissioner Green asked if there was any idea as to when they would be awarded the additional funding and she stated no. She said that was a courtesy, the County took advantage of the opportunity and was like a "hurry up, wait and see" and they had to meet the threshold for the initial award; the \$7,967,316 and the County did that as far as documents that was submitted by December 3rd. Now they were waiting for the precursory review to be done by the Gadsden County liaison at FDEM. There was a step one and a step two review and was why it was taking so long.

Mr. Dixon said the point was, it was not our fault, it was the process. The County's job was to make sure the l's were dotted and t's crossed.

Commissioner NeSmith wanted to make sure they followed protocol since Commissioner Hinson called the question. Chair Holt said there was no motion yet. He thanked the Administrator for

meeting with him yesterday and asked if they had submitted the paperwork for the remainder of the drawdown. Mr. Dixon responded yes; it was on review for the second step.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. MR. THOMAS HAD COMMENTS.

Mr. Thomas said he had more comments and could make them during his update.

CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE OPPOSED.

CLERK OF COURT

9. Updates

Mr. Thomas started with broadband.

He said Ms. Hamilton mentioned documentation and that was so important. He said having the proper documentation in place would help, especially if there is more money to be issued out. He said he understood he had not been there and had not seen a contract, however every check cut had to be documented. The attorney talked about deliverables and they need to address that. It needed to be addressed, if they cannot deliver, pay for what is delivered. They do not cut checks in advance.

2) He said a couple of weeks ago, they readvertised the budget to take care of the Truth in Millage issue and wanted to mention, as an observation, under Miscellaneous Revenue was the figure of \$1.7 Million and to him that seemed a little high and wanted to see what made up that. He said there was a discussion during the summer of “missing revenue” and never had a clear understanding saw what they were doing. In reviewing the miscellaneous revenue was a figure of \$357,911 and when he looked at the budget document, he saw was ½ cent Indigent Care Reserves. He said the bottom line was they could not use that money to balance their budget. He stated they could not and he would not transfer Indigent Cares money into the General Fund for operating. He added when they were renegotiating their contract with CRMC, they told the County they did not need all the Indigent Care money. The County started giving them \$200,000. He told them at that time all they could use the money for was Indigent Care.

3) There was a line item for transfer from FEMA; he said they were relying on money from FEMA for some costs that had previously been denied and they now had a company to go after those funds. He informed them if they do not receive the money, it impacts the current fiscal year and they might have a fund balance of less than \$2 Million instead of around \$3.5 Million.

He added this was just observations in the budgeting process and wanted to be on record with this. He said a cynical person could say they were trying to hide something.

He said he wanted to end on something positive; they still have \$2 Million in SHIP Housing that County has.

Chair Holt said when Hurricane Michael hit, the State mentioned they needed to have 10 inspectors and the County was not doing it. She said when you get off track, it was hard to get

back to where they were. She said they did not have people in place. These were things they were learning and have to do.

She told the Administrator they needed to take care of items with the budget.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was glad for the reference to blue tarps still on some of the buildings; it was not only in District 3 but all over. With COVID, they were fortunate to have the Pittman Law Group and a person that has background in Probate and before COVID was working on having a seminar or workshop for the citizens to help them understand their issues. He said they needed to expedite to help educate and help people with housing issues.

Chair Holt said at the FAMU Center a few years ago, there were two judges giving a workshop on Probate. She said also they gave funding to North Florida Legal Services.

Commissioner Hinson said if not mistaken, Dr. Sandra Robinson represents rural development and she sent a letter to commissioners on how they could get with residents to help bring closure.

Mr. Dixon said this was the kind of creativity that they will need in order to accomplish some of the things they were talking about.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

10. Updates

Mr. Dixon said there will be a Ribbon cutting at the new AG center on December 18th at 1:00 pm;

They mentioned earlier they will start the budget process earlier so they could get around the bigger issues and finish sooner;

He said Commissioner Hinson asked about Emergency Housing and they have done some research and they think they have a formula they will be sending out and if they agree on it, will be on a meeting in January;

CARES Update- received 332 Small Business grants; paid little over \$1 Million; had payment requests for 41 in, had 74 that did not qualify; expect will pay about \$1.35 Million out for small business. He added this could change as the reviews continue. With the Resident Grants they had received 647 applications and 146 have been paid, \$290,000 requested and 254 did not qualify. He said they estimate they will probably end up spending \$556,000 at the end of the program.

Had a call from Capital Health Plan and they will be sending a refund of approximately \$90,000.

Chair Holt thanked the Health Council because they went out door to door. She said this was not a separate non-profit, they worked under the Commission and was funded by the BOCC.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his comment was to the County Administrator and the attorney; he recalled sometime during the onset of COVID-19; he wrote a letter to regarding the Health Council to the Governor that started the testing sites at the hospital. When he did that, he

reported later that the letter was written and was urgent and he was chastised by the Board and they said that any letter that was written and sent out by the Board, needed to have the consent of the Board and a copy go to all commissioners. He said this was not a request, but any letter that left the office from anybody, if it is sent to one Commissioner, it needed to be sent to all commissioners for transparency.

Commissioner Hinson said in all fairness, the commissioners that lambasted him were no longer here. If they could recall, he and Commissioner Holt was the one that ushered them to move forward.

Chair Holt said all commissioners need to know the same thing.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

11 Updates

Mr. Knowles asked for Board direction on the WastePro contract and the issue with Piggly Wiggly.

Chair Holt asked if Piggly Wiggly had to use that vendor. He said he did not want to speak specifically to the vendor because he had not reviewed the issue but there was a contract with WastePro that continues to renew for 5-year terms and they needed to look at those types of contracts. She asked if there was anything that forced the vendor to use WastePro. Mr. Knowles stated that Chapter 70 of the Code was what granted the Board the right to enter into a contract with explicitly and thought it dealt with all collection of refuse within the County. Chair Holt asked if every business had to use them. Mr. Knowles stated for certain types of refuse and most types of refuse, yes, that was what WastePro was saying and why he asked direction on it in case it needed to be investigated further or bring back in front of the Board. He said this was a new issue for him, but his concerns were 1) the evergreen contract, he did not like those; and 2) what to do with this particular issue because the contract they have did in fact say we would use best efforts to try and enforce the provisions of the contract.

Commissioner Viegbesie said this was also an item he had taken a look at because this had been brought to his attention. Also, there were other citizens that were concerned with WastePro and their way of collecting trash; trashcans were sometimes left in the middle of the road, etc. He suggested they actually find time to workshop that contract and see how it could be revised and make it possible for those who want, to be able to use alternate trash collectors. WastePro has a monopoly.

Chair Holt asked for Board direction.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought they needed to get direction from the attorney. He wanted the attorney to see if it was legal and what do they do; if it was not legal, what do they do. If Piggly Wiggly was not doing anything wrong, what was the problem.

Chair Holt asked Mr. Knowles to get that information to all the commissioners to give them an opportunity to look over it.

Commissioner Hinson said also WastePro called him several times and asked him to look into it. He added he would hate to harass a business owner if they had no grounds to do so.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

12. Report and Discussion of Public Issues

Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1

Commissioner Hinson said two weeks ago he brought up a suggestion that they should have a conversation with WastePro. He added that maybe they should have an emergency meeting before Christmas with them. He further stated this was the wrong time of year to have debris all over the place.

Chair Holt suggested, if possible, to have the Administrator look into that and contact WastePro and Commissioner Hinson said yes.

He also thanked the Board for being positive the last few months. There were a lot of residents hurting and COVID was rising heavily with heart attacks, etc. That was why he said, as a Board, they had to be aware of other people and they should put the emphasis on assisting residents. He thought they had a great board, needed to stay positive and agree to disagree.

Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3

Commissioner NeSmith said now that there was an executed contract with the County Administrator, could they put on the calendar to workshop for the goals and needs of the County.

Mr. Dixon said they had located the documents from the previous the previous Board and they will be provided to them and schedule a workshop.

Commissioner NeSmith said around 2015 or 2016 there was a strategic planning session in Gretna and he would like for them to review that document so life could be added to it. Mr. Dixon said those were the documents and they will be provided.

Commissioner Viegbesie said to the Administrator and Commissioner Nesmith that they worked on the Missions Statement and needed to work on the Strategic Plan and Succession Plan.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the Administrator for meeting with him and making himself available.

Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4

Chair Holt said with tracking the devices that Commissioner Green brought up, they could have a monthly report and said to the Administrator that was something they could go ahead and do.

She said she spoke with Senator Hayes' assistant; he is the one that is over the budgetary system for the Senate. She said they invited him but he could not make it because of the virus.

She stated the 4:00 workshops should start in January before the 6:00 meeting.

She said one evening, before the hurricane, she was out enjoying herself and her phone was going dead, she received a call from a gentleman and she told him he had 6 seconds, her phone was dying. He told her it was Governor Scott, for her to call him back.

Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 7:24 p.m.

She said he said something very important, that the County had not signed the emergency forms for the hurricane and would not receive the FEMA money if the forms were not signed. She said she called the Administrator and they were calling trying to get the Commissioners to arrange an emergency meeting.

She stated they may need to look at an attendance policy and they were a non-chartered County so they could make one.

Large Item Pick-up- She said there was a lot of stuff sitting on US 90 West and she encouraged everyone to take their stuff to the dump.

She thanked everyone for wearing their masks.

Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5

Commissioner Green said he wanted to mimic what the Clerk had to say regarding delivering and wanted to make sure they did not spend what was not needed and was why he asked and was hoping Ms. Hamilton was still available. He asked how many devices had already been distributed and how they could find that information. He said he would love to find out how they were tracking the devices that were going out. He added that he understood that based on the approval, they would be refunded a certain amount of money if the devices were not used with the surety bond. He added that was why he wanted to make sure they were able to keep track on the devices and asked who was responsible for tracking. He asked if the Administrator could get them the information regarding that on who was tracking and what had been sold so they would have an idea as to where they were when it comes down to the funding in reference to that project.

He also thanked the County Administrator for making himself readily available for them and stated he had been a great help. He said he was looking forward to the future of the County.

He said he talked to a constituent who was refused CARES Act money due to the fact that she and her husband both applied but there were two different businesses that were impacted by using the same address. He asked for direction on why they were refused because they were two separate businesses using the same address.

He asked that they be mindful they were approaching the holiday season and a lot of people would be gathering and they could not let their guard down with the virus. He said as a person that has known several people that have been affected and some that have died, he asked that they practice safe patterns during the holiday season; it has already been projected that the numbers would rise. He reminded all the constituents that this was serious and they had to practice safety.

Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
December 15, 2020 – Regular Meeting

Commissioner Viegbesie dittoed what Commissioner Green said. May the Holidays be full of love, peace and happiness.

Receipt and File

UPCOMING MEETINGS

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 728 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair
Board of County Commissioners**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk