

AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MARCH 10, 2021 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
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Amendments and Approval of Agenda

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

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the 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.

The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.

Commissioner Green read aloud the COVID-19 statement.

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. PUBLIC HEARING-State of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) Small Cities Program Public Hearing #1

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. This is a cost reimbursement item, meaning the monies had to be spent and would then be reimbursed.

Sheree Keeler, The Integrity Group, appeared before the Board and gave an overview of this item.

She explained it was a requirement of the CDBG for a public hearing. The purpose of program is to provide funding opportunity for small cities and counties statewide to:

Prepare for, prevent, or respond to the health and economic impacts of COVID-19.

She explained the grant cycle opened February 1, 2021; pre-application is due March 15, 2021 the final application is anticipated to be due Summer 2021, pending DEO announcement, and applicants may submit one (1) application for one (1) activity. There is no match requirement.

She explained the eligible applicants: 46 Counties with less than 200,000 residents in the unincorporated areas; 205 cities with less than 50,000 people that have not accepted special entitlement status and have not opted to join an entitlement program; 252 total number of Small Cities and Counties eligible to compete for CDBG-CV funds (including the Cities of Quincy, Havana and Midway).

Eligible Activities:

All activities must prevent, prepare for, or respond to the coronavirus and have a:
Direct effect-Costs directly associated with coronavirus prevention, preparation, or response;
and
Indirect effect-Economic and housing market disruptions.

Examples of Eligible Activities:

Acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or installation of public works, facilities, and site or other improvements:

- Rehabilitate a facility for testing, diagnosis or treatment. Reconstruction of roads/sidewalks (expansion) to allow for social distancing.
- Acquire and rehabilitate, or construct, a group living facility that may be used to centralize patients undergoing treatment.
- Installation of wiring, fiber optic cables, and permanently affixed equipment such as receivers for areas to receive broadband/internet access.

Rehabilitation of buildings and improvements:

- Rehabilitate a senior center, community center or homeless shelter by replacing the HVAC system and/or installing air purification system.
- Acquisition and/or rehabilitation of a building to expand capacity of homeless shelters to accommodate social distancing and isolation.
- Installation of Wi-Fi routers/extenders in affordable housing buildings for LMI residents.

Assistance to Businesses:

Provision of assistance to private, for profit entities, when appropriate to carry out an economic development project.

- Provide grants to support new businesses or business expansion to create jobs and manufacture medical supplies necessary to respond to infectious disease.

Provision of assistance to microenterprises

- Provide technical assistance, grants and other financial assistance to establish, stabilize and expand microenterprises that provide medical, food delivery, cleaning, and other services to support home health and quarantine.

Public Services

Provision of assistance to primarily low- and moderate-income persons.

She went over the planning and stated there were two types: Planning only grants and Project planning.

She then listed the Pre-application Requirements and they must be submitted no later than Monday, March 15, 2021 by 5:00 p.m. Also, the requested information must be attached to the application. She also explained there were procedures in place to ensure the cost has not or will not be paid by another source when it provides financial assistance with CDBG-CV funds. Have to have duplication of Benefits Policy to ensure not double-dipping.

LMI Tracts and Block Numbers (Low and Moderate Income) Summary data for Gadsden County. She explained that 58.3% of the population was LMI and the poverty rate is 19% and was higher than the average for the State of Florida; median household income is approximately \$41,401.00; the unemployment rate is 4.1% and the language spoken at home other than English is 10%.

She said Citizen Participation was very important and they wanted to make sure citizens have an opportunity to know about the program and provide input.

She said the Application Evaluation was critical and they were looking at:

- Readiness to proceed, being shovel-ready;
- LMI Impact;
- COVID-19 Economic Impact to the Community;
- Applicants Experience, Past Performance and Organizational Capacity;
- Need and Justification-project outcome must address the needs identified; and
- Cost reasonableness and feasibility of Project.

One project being looked at was Stevens School and making it a COVID shelter. Requirements are Gadsden County not have resources to construct the facility; does not have available low-to-moderate income housing that can be dedicated to LMI or homeless COVID positive individuals; hotels/motels that are willing to provide rooms for COVID individuals; and schools currently provide disaster sheltering for weather related disaster events and are not suitable for COVID sheltering.

Commissioner Green said he was excited about this opportunity. He asked if they had everything they needed to have in preparation to make sure they were granted or awarded this grant. Mr. Dixon said this meeting was part of that.

Commissioner Viegbesie made a statement of commendation for getting them to where they were currently and felt this was a very good thing.

Commissioner Hinson added to what Commissioner Viegbesie said. He asked the interest rate. Mr. Dixon said the consultation rate was \$17,785; if the County does not get it, they would not pay it. He asked the going rate in neighboring counties.

Mr. Dixon said he was not sure.

Commissioner Hinson asked what the 8% was and Mr. Dixon said that was the administrative fees they could charge.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the amount of money they were asking for.

Ms. Keeler explained page 32 had everything broken down on how it had to be submitted.

Mr. Dixon said there were two distinct things; there was writing the grant and presenting grant and if the grant is granted, there was management of grant and that would allow up to \$50,000 for staff to oversee the grant.

Commissioner Hinson said who would be person that received the \$50,000, would it be staff or another company.

Mr. Dixon said he hoped they were moving toward developing in-house management of grants where they could. But some grants were so specific they would have to see when they got there as to how they would be managed.

Chair Holt said this has been something she has been trying to do for the past three to four years. She added it was a good idea but they would need to go after more funding. Also, there were economic development grants that could be gotten. She added that this was a great project.

Chair Holt asked if Mr. Dixon was able to get with FAMU on what work they had already done and Mr. Dixon said they were reaching out but up to now they had not been able to.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated they had not asked for comments from the public. Chair Holt asked and there were none.

COMMISSIONER GREEN RESTATED HIS MOTION AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
March 10, 2021 – Special Meeting

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:40 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk