

**AT A PRE-MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY,
FLORIDA HELD ON MARCH 16, 2021 AT 4:30 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 pre-meeting workshop, asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

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 NeSmith read the COVID-19 statement aloud for the Chair.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Review and Discuss the March 16, 2021 Regular BOCC Meeting Agenda

Mr. Dixon introduced the items on the Consent Agenda and Chair Holt asked if there were any questions. Commissioner NeSmith asked if they were in the regular Board meeting. Chair Holt explained they were reviewing the agenda before the regular 6:00 p.m. meeting to get clarity and to ask any needed questions before the Meeting.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if they were going to be having the pre-meetings to review the agenda, what was the purpose of having individual meetings with the Administrator and taking up their time to ask questions that he would normally bring department heads to the pre-meeting to explain.

Chair Holt said the pre-meeting was not just for Commissioners, it was advertised to the public and the public could also ask questions on the items. If they have questions, it would still give the Administrator and staff an opportunity to bring it to the 6:00p.m. meeting. She observed this in Orange County.

Commissioner Green said the pre-meeting was great but he concurred with Commissioner Viegbesie in reference to this was time consuming as well. If they do meet with the

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Administrator in private and citizens did have questions, they could always contact the Commissioners and ask questions and could go back and answer their questions. He added he was under the impression they were here just for a workshop.

Chair Holt said this was a workshop but not normally what happens. Normally they come into the 4:30 meeting; anything they needed to know, any documentations, they have aides because they were a larger county. They did not have to ask questions at all but if a citizen wanted to comment or had a question, they could do that and would not put the Administrator or staff on the spot. She also said it was this was not a regular meeting and if they could not make it, it was understandable. She said this should make the meeting faster because if they had questions it could be addressed before the 6:00 meeting.

Mr. Dixon said they also needed to add item 4a-Approval of Ashbritt, Inc. for Emergency Debris Management Services.

Mr. Knowles said to also to discuss the Governor's Executive Order regarding fines on masks.

Mr. Hinson said he had reservations regarding Ashbritt. He felt that item needed to be advertised properly.

Mr. Knowles explained it was brought to them back in October and had already been voted on- the only thing changed was to add where Commissioner Hinson and Commissioner Taylor wanted in terms of minority participation and local involvement. It has already been bid, RFP'd, two companies selected and had hard copies at the last meeting. He offered to answer any questions.

Commissioner Hinson said he had the same reservations at the last meeting and it should be advertised, it was not about getting hard copy, the citizens should have chance to ask questions. He said he could not support an item that may be catastrophic to the County.

Chair Holt asked Mr. Knowles to address the changes that Commissioner Hinson and Commissioner Taylor wanted in the contract.

Mr. Knowles started to explain and Commissioner Hinson interrupted and said it was not about explaining, the problem he had was bringing an item to the Board five minutes before the meeting last time and now again. Citizens had not had a chance to see it beforehand.

Chair Holt asked if the contract addressed the concerns that the commissioners had and Mr. Knowles said yes. He said the original contract concern was minority participation. Mr. Knowles also explained it was not a new item, it was before them in October, just never executed because of items Commissioner Hinson and Commissioner Taylor wanted minority participation and local utilization to be added. The other reason for bringing it, the County did not have a debris removal contractor and wanted to make sure the contract was signed because they did not want to be caught once hurricane season started.

Chair Holt said the Commissioner's concern was about it being added to the agenda today and the way it was added last time. Mr. Knowles explained this was bringing it back and adding the provisions that were previously asked to be added.

Mr. Dixon said it could be added to the next agenda.

Oak Grove Substation Special Exception and Conceptual and Preliminary Site Plan

Mr. Dixon explained the two Public Hearing items that was asking for special exception and running concurrently. They were both for a sub-station and Ms. Jeglie would be addressing that.

Jill Jeglie, Senior Planner, appeared before the Board and gave a brief description of the item.

Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 4:51 p.m.

Approval for Adopt-A-Road Agreement with M.R. Moore Chapter #21 for Pt. Milligan Road

Mr. Dixon introduced the item and there was no discussion.

CR 65 (Attapulcus Hwy) SCOP Supplemental Agreement

Mr. Dixon introduced the item and there was no discussion.

Approval of the 5F Music Event

Mr. Dixon said this event was scheduled to take place in May and they have scaled back significantly with COVID and agreed to abide by CDC regulations. They have tried to be a good partner with the County and have agreed to everything the County has asked of them for the event.

Chair Holt said it would be a good time to bring their Events policy back so they could look at what might need to be answered with it came to events in the County.

Mr. Dixon stated tomorrow was Legislative Day at the Capitol with the Association of Counties and on the 23rd was the second part of the Board retreat from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

2. Gadsden County Development Council Report to the Board of County Commissioners to include grand funding ROI, site readiness, talent development, and business engagement strategies resulting in business growth and attraction

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated Mr. Antonio Jefferson was present.

Antonio Jefferson, Chair of GCDC, appeared before the Board. He thanked the Board for their commitment over the years and gave a background of accomplished things over the years.

Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 4:58 p.m.

Beth Cicchetti, Executive Director, appeared before the Board and gave an update of the accomplishments over the years.

Chair Holt said GCDC was established by the Board of County Commissioners and was not a separate group that did not have ties to them like the Health Council. This was established to try to help with economic development.

Commissioner Viegbesie commented and suggested to the two new Commissioners, this was a very vital economic development partner in Gadsden County. He said the County could not

make money if they did not spend it and they needed to look at putting “life blood” into real economic development. They need to look at throwing some “life blood” into real economic development and work with GCDC. He added that Four Star Freightliner also took interns for mechanical engine repairs and two young guys was there from East Gadsden and was a very good chance of them getting employed upon completion.

Chair Holt said this was needed again and was not something they could meet individually on. They need hospitality, they needed to be welcoming to the companies; on the infrastructure part, everything needed to be looked at, electricity, gas, sewer; whatever was not there, they needed to have an idea about going after funding. She hoped they could have 10 more of these meetings.

Mr. Jefferson said one issue happening in legislature was Senate Bill 982 and House bill 6071 and asked them to please pass.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:59 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk