

AT A WORKSHOP MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON OCTOBER 7,
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-zoom
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5-zoom
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Sara Green, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Dixon called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. and has a moment of silence. He then led in the Pledge of Allegiance of the U.S. Flag.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)

Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, Public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov until noon on Tuesday, October 7, 2021. Comments submitted after the deadline, but prior to the meeting, will be added to the official record, but the County cannot guarantee that Commissioners and staff will have adequate time to review comments prior to the meeting.

Mr. Dixon read the above statement.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Discuss County Administrator Evaluation Form (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. He stated that the commissioners have been given information regarding what the county has voted on and passed in prior years. Additionally, they created a document about the county's strategic plan and the priorities before that document has been provided.

Ms. Butler- HR Director- will be available to speak on the items and answer any questions that there may be.

Ms. Butler came before the Board. She reiterated what Mr. Dixon stated. She stated that the evaluation form was workshopped in November 2015, for the County Administrator and the County Attorney. It was then approved at a regular meeting on February 9, 2017. She stated that the County Attorney evaluation form has not been done in the past, which is the purpose of the workshop, to include the evaluation for the County Attorney.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he decided to add in the evaluation for the attorney because their contracts can be cancelled before they expire if they're not satisfied. The administrator determines how well they (attorney) does for us (the Board).

Ms. Butler asked if there were any questions regarding the forms. She stated that they have been approved. She stated that moving forward, the Commissioners can set appointments for meetings with the administrator.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Commissioner Hinson if he had any questions. Commissioner Hinson stated he was just listening. Commissioner Viegbesie asked Commissioner Green if he had any questions, he stated he had no questions regarding the forms.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated since there are no questions, then they can continue with the agenda.

Chair Holt entered the workshop at 4:40 pm.

Ms. Butler stated since there were no questions, she suggested it's best all commissioners schedule a time with the administrator to go over the evaluation. Once it is concluded, then they can bring back the cumulative scores for the administrator and present that at a regular meeting as they have done in the past.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the commissioners would need to meet with the administrator. His understanding was that the commissioners will individually do this on their own time based on what they observe and not talk to the administrator. It will be given to HR to compile the ranking to determine whether the work of the administrator is being met.

Ms. Butler said it is at their leisure. They can do it individually and meet with the administrator or complete the evaluation and return it back to her by the deadline that is given.

Commissioner Hinson asked where's the document that says they need to meet with the Administrator or the Attorney to discuss the evaluation?

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he doesn't think meeting with the administrator was part of the process originally. Commissioner Viegbesie gave control of the meeting to Chair Holt.

Commissioner Hinson asked again where does it say that they need to meet with the Administrator. Ms. Butler stated it does not state it. She was explaining the procedure that had taken place in the past. It's not a requirement to meet with the administrator.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated in order to make an effective performance evaluation, the evaluation should be independently completed by the evaluator.

Chair Holt addressed the Board at 4:46 p.m. She asked where Commissioner Green was because he was the one who asked for this workshop. She stated she saw him on Zoom and Commissioner Green said it was ok and he wasn't the only one who asked for this workshop.

Chair Holt asked if anything needed to be added or changed on the form? Commissioner Green asked if they are able to dialogue the form as a Board once they complete the evaluation? Chair Holt said it was up to the Board on how to do the process. She said normally after completing the evaluation, you do give the person some feedback. She said if they want to meet after as a Board, it has to be in a workshop or a regular meeting. They could also meet individually without doing so. Commissioner Green asked because he wants an opportunity to discuss the evaluation post-evaluation.

Commissioner Viegbesie recalls that during evaluations with the Tallahassee City Manager, etc., individuals met with them individually and then the questions about the evaluation are what's brought to the meeting post-evaluation.

Chair Holt asked what was the timeline of the evaluations? Ms. Butler stated the County Administrator was hired on December 1st, 2020, so it's coming up on a year so it needs to be done within the next month or couple of months. Chair Holt asked if it would need to be finished in a few weeks? Ms. Butler stated yes, if you want it done prior to December 1st.

Commissioner Hinson stated that they should be able to do the evaluation right now and not have two weeks to persuade with someone about their evaluation. He believes it should take about three minutes to complete it. It doesn't take 2-4 weeks to fill out evaluation, if so, somebody is talking to somebody to affect their decisions.

Chair Holt interrupted Commissioner Hinson because she said it could give a negative intent from what he said regarding others persuading someone on their decisions on the evaluation.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he sees where Hinson is coming from. He stated there are two things that would cause him to go to that approach. The first reason is because the administrator has not been here for a year yet, so it would be hard to evaluate someone. If it's going to be an annual evaluation then it needs to be a year in order to evaluate him. The second reason is because they are workshoping this. Since they are workshoping this, he doesn't know if these documents are upon additions, revisions or deletions. If there are no changes then it should come before the board for formal approval, then we can evaluate. There are two new commissioners that may want to make changes on the form.

Commissioner Green stated he is fine with the document. He just wants to make sure that there is a set timeframe for the evaluation. He thinks it should be done after his full year as it's an annual evaluation.

Commissioner NeSmith is inaudible due to technical issues.

Commissioner Hinson stated that his comments weren't towards a specific person. He states it should be done before one year. It is almost impossible to do it after the year because after the second year, the contract may roll over. They would have to do it a month or so before the contract expires. They need to let them know in advance if the contract is cancelled. They have to check the specifics on letting them know in advance. He says he judge's a person based on what he sees. He says if you're not for the kids or senior citizens, he is not for you.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they have a schedule for evaluating the administrator or attorney? Chair Holt said they have done annual evaluations. Ms. Butler stated yes, they have done annual evaluations for County administrator, but not for the County Attorney. Chair Holt asked for how long is the County Attorney's contract. Ms. Butler stated the County Attorney's contract is for two years. Chair Holt said they could do evaluations in the middle of the year but usually it's done at the end of the year.

Chair Holt asked if there is a time that they would like the evaluations to be done? Mr. Dixon stated that the attorney may have a notice clause. Chair Holt asked for copies of the contracts from Ms. Butler. Attorney Clayton says he has both of the contracts.

Commissioner Green asked what goals are they basing their performance off of? Chair Holt stated the evaluation is based on things in the packet. The goals for accomplishments will need to be added or set.

Mr. Dixon said that not only are the goals based off of what you see and how you feel, the goals are also the strategic plan goals that are there and any other standards that you'd want to use, depending on whether it is for the administrator or the attorney.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that all of the goals have to do with how well we're moving along with our strategic plan and moving along with the County. He thinks the document covers everything that needs to be discussed and used.

Commissioner Hinson hopes that the packet will be read objectively. He wants to make sure that things are going well and evaluate based on that. He hopes to find strategies that work with the attorney and administrator to make sure they move Gadsden County forward.

Chair Holt stated everything they can do for people has to be funded. She said they have to look at the economic development side. She says they can look at page 2 of the packet and see if those are what they want to evaluate on. She said the funding for "Pay Plan for Sheriff's Office" is very important when the federal money dries up. The funding for "Construct or Open a hospital", set for 2025, means they have to have a lot of planning right now. She references page 3 and things that weren't done, like meeting with economic developer. She said that the Board sets these dates and they may need to move them or change them and check them off as they go.

Commissioner Hinson referenced on page 3, that if you aren't for Broadband, that's a pet peeve of his. He says it's been on the "agenda to do" for years. He stated four kids in Midway were getting killed because of unsafe roadways, it's not about who it is in charge but rather if things get done. He wants to tackle issues that deal with people. He said "as long as you help the people, I'm with you."

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they have a schedule that is in place to evaluate the County Administrator and to evaluate the County Attorney? He wanted to be very specific because he does not want to bring subjectivity in this process. His question is, once they hire a County Administrator, do they have a schedule to evaluate that person every quarter, 6 months, 9 months, or every year. He states that the Administrator and the Attorney needs feedback on a

consistent basis. Chair Holt said they normally evaluate the person in those two positions at the end of their contract. She said it is up to the Board to decide if they want an annual evaluation. Chair Holt asked Ms. Butler if she has any suggestions. Ms. Butler says in the March 7th, 2017 meeting, they agreed/voted on an annual performance review for the County Administrator as well as the County Attorney. Chair Holt agreed that's what they previously voted on. She stated that they have two new commissioners, so it is an open board, and they can make any suggestions they would like. Commissioner NeSmith's other question was that he supports an annual evaluation but they need to create a schedule so that if the person is hired January 1st, then they need to start the evaluation process in September or October. In other words, they need to have a schedule where they are informed of when it's time to evaluate. Then, they need a timeframe to have it done and provided to whoever they need to submit the information to.

Commissioner NeSmith says they did not provide the County Administrator and County Attorney specific goals and objectives to meet. We gave the County Administrator a catalog but did not provide the specific goals to reach. He states that they need to provide them with a syllabus of goals to achieve because otherwise it's too subjective. Chair Holt stated some of these goals in the packet are being done. Some goals didn't have specifics on how to be done. Commissioner NeSmith said they have to be clear about their expectations. He wants it clearly outlined in a document.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated we were supposed to continue developing the process and document. He stated that this document wasn't finished, it was where they stopped. He stated that they need to have more workshops on this. He stated that the evaluation process will become objective and not subjective by doing that.

Commissioner Hinson stated this is the reason why he was suggesting to have many workshops. He said in reality, every Board member could have requested for this to be on the agenda. He said they can't talk big talk when they had the opportunity to put this on the agenda. He says there's nothing subjective about this evaluation. He says they were able to get people from the Florida Association of Counties help develop the document because they have experience in it and not making it subjective. He says the current evaluation encompasses everything. He asked Mrs. Steele to go through the slides to make his point that the evaluation isn't subjective.

Chair Holt stated they chose this as an instrument. She says that they need to come together for when they can evaluate. This workshop is to decide how they want to evaluate and when they want to evaluate.

Commissioner NeSmith deferred to Commissioner Green and Commissioner Viegbesie.

Commissioner Green asked how can they evaluate them without the tools for what's expected as a current Board. He suggests that don't have a fifteen-minute meeting before a meeting. He wants a whole discussion on it that they don't have a time limit on.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that they have accepted the document as the appropriate document. He says now is the timeline, which is the procedure. He asked when are they going to start and end the evaluation. He said If they could vote today then timeline develops today which is why he suggests another workshop.

Chair Holt stated that they have to have this done by December. She said they have a meeting in two weeks so that they can vote on what they decide. She asked if they want to have anything to be voted on in the next meeting to be added on.

Mr. Dixon asked if the annual date is the anniversary date of the hire or a calendar date? Chair Holt says it can't be a calendar date because they would be unsure when they hire an administrator. It would have to be 30 days or 60 days before the evaluation.

Commissioner NeSmith asked when did they approve the evaluation instrument? Commissioner Viegbesie stated it was approved in 2016 by the prior Board. Commissioner NeSmith asked if this instrument the same for the County Attorney? Ms. Butler stated they were approved in March, 2017. They were two different instruments for both the administrator and the attorney. Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the workshop was in 2016. Ms. Butler states yes, it began November, 2016 and was approved March 7, 2017. Commissioner NeSmith asked if both instruments require them to evaluate annually? Chair Holt stated yes. Commissioner Nesmith suggests at 9 months all the Commissioners receive the instrument, that gives them 30 days to fill it out. By the 10th month, it goes to Mrs. Butler, then the next 30 days gives each administrator the opportunity to meet with the staff persons to discuss their evaluations. Then, in 11th month that information goes to the chair and dispersed. Then, they have 30 days after that so that the administrator or attorney has time to decide how to move forward. He asked if they need to evaluate by December. Chair Holt said they need to evaluate before December 1, for the administrator and Mr. Knowles said the end of February 2022 for the attorney. He stated March was the hire date.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that they can evaluate the administrator recognizing the Board didn't do due diligence or give specifics. He says they don't have enough information to evaluate accordingly. Chair Holt says they have all been with each one about a year now. She said they are able to evaluate them based on what they have seen so far. The points will have to roll over to next evaluation because they need to be evaluated no later than the first of November.

Commissioner Viegbesie says that what he's about to say is in regards to both of the positions, but is more to the situation that the contract for the law firm that they have ends March first of next year. He said they need to do that expeditiously so that they know ahead of time if they won't be the attorney. He said timeliness is very important.

Commissioner Hinson says they have three employees. They have the County Administrator, the County Attorney and the Engineering Firm. They have other contractors as well. He says they need to give them 30 days in advance.

Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 6:14PM.

Commissioner Hinson thinks that since Commissioner Green and Commissioner NeSmith want this and they are not ready, he says they should wait it out and not rush. He suggests waiting until next year. Chair Holt stated that they have to do the annual evaluation. Commissioner Hinson stated that they're not ready for it. He says what Ms. Butler stated makes since, they could talk individually to the Administrator and see if they can come up with a resolution.

Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 6:17PM.

Commissioner NeSmith stated he appreciates the comments from Commissioner Viegbesie and Commissioner Hinson. He asked when did the contract with the law firm begin? Mr. Knowles stated in March of 2020. Commissioner NeSmith asked if there was an evaluation done in February, 2021. Chair Holt stated no, she doesn't think there was one done, but they are overdue. Commissioner NeSmith said he doesn't have a problem doing evaluation and they need to get used to doing them again. He says they need to come up with dates to have the evaluations done. He said they need to decide when they can evaluate and get them back to HR and when they can sit down with each party then get it to the public.

Commissioner Green agrees that they do need to move forward with the evaluations as well. He says that they can only evaluate with what they have experience with. He doesn't see the purpose of prolonging it or not doing it.

Chair Holt asked Mr. Dixon when the forms could be sent to them. Mr. Dixon says the forms can get out to them by October 21st. He says they need to be completed and returned to HR by the first meeting of November. Chair Holt says they can give the forms to HR whenever they are done then put it on agenda for a meeting whenever they want. Chair Holt says to have them by two months before the contract ends.

Mr. Knowles asked if the Administrator's evaluation would be two weeks from today and the Attorney's would be first meeting in January. Chair Holt stated yes.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated they should let the HR director give her opinion on the timeline for effectiveness.

Ms. Butler says that she is able to get the evaluation forms to the Commissioners electronically so that it is a littler easier. She suggests October 21st, two weeks from today, to get the evaluation forms back to her. It gives her time for the information to be compiled and be presented at the first meeting in November. That meets the 6-week timeline Chair Holt suggested. For the attorney, it would be the same process. She asked if that timeline works. Chair Holt stated yes.

Commissioner Hinson asked if the Commissioners received their administrative aids? Holt stated no.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Ms. Butler that when she sends out the evaluation packets, if she could include the dates the form needs to be turned in by as a gentle reminder. Ms. Butler said OKAY.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Ms. Butler if she can make the forms writable? Ms. Butler stated yes, she can make it a form field document. Commissioner NeSmith thanked everyone.

2. Discuss County Attorney Evaluation Form (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
October 07, 2021, Evaluation Form Workshop

MOTION TO ADJOURN

**WITH THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE WORKSHOP WAS
DECLARED ADJOURNED AT 6:33 P.M.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

**BRENDA HOLT, Chair
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk