

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON DECEMBER 7, 2021, 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
Sara Green, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Viegbesie called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., welcomed everyone, asked Rev. Willie Fagg to give the Invocation via Zoom (could not be heard), and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Dixon asked to table item 20 Request for Outside Employment and add Item 20b-Approval of Legislative Recommendations.

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

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES

CONSENT

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

- 1. Ratification Memo**
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
 - October 5, 2021 Regular Meeting**
- 3. Approval and Signature for Satisfaction of Special Assessment Lien SHIP Housing Rehabilitation Program or Emergency (ER) Program**
- 4. Approval of the E911 Text-to-911 Public Safety Installation and Maintenance Scope of Work and Master Service Agreement with Century Link Communication, LLC**

ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

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 December 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.

Dr. Joe Parramore, Greensboro Volunteer Fire Department

Fran Jones, 4984 Alvin Dr., Pensacola, FL - Flint Garden Apartments

PUBLIC HEARINGS

5. Public Hearing-Second Reading of Ordinance 2021-014 Relating to Immigration Services; Creating Article XX, Section XX-XXX of the Code of Ordinances of Gadsden County, Florida; Prohibiting the Unlicensed Practice of Law for the Provision of Immigration Services

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval of proposed Ordinance 2021-014 which would add to the Gadsden County Code of Ordinances certain prohibitions against the unlicensed practice of law for the provision of immigration services; requiring notaries public who are not attorneys to include certain language in advertisements, and prohibiting advertisements for notarial services that include the translation of "notary public" into a language other than English.

Mr. Knowles said this was brought for the first reading at the last meeting and explained the ordinance. He said it was approved at the first reading and no changes have been made.

Chair Viegbesie announced this was a public hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak and there was no-one.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner NeSmith asked questions regarding the language and Mr. Knowles responded.

Chair Viegbesie asked if there were any other questions and there was none. He called for the vote.

THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

6. Public Hearing-First Reading of Ordinance 2021-015 Board of County Commissioners of Gadsden County, FL, Amending and Adopting Rules of Procedure and Decorum for the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval of Ordinance 2021-015 which would add to the Gadsden County Code of Ordinances certain provisions amending the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners Rules and Procedures.

Chair Viegbesie asked if there were any comments from the public and there were none.

Commissioner NeSmith said they have had extensive discussion on how they would govern themselves and could they make changes after tonight. Mr. Knowles stated if they make changes, they would need to do so tonight. Commissioner NeSmith asked if the evaluation of County Administrator was included as far as the schedule? Mr. Knowles said there was no direction to include that. He added said this was how they would conduct a meeting, not how to evaluate the Administrator. That would be a separate policy.

Chair Viegbesie asked if there were any other questions and there were none.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

GENERAL BUSINESS

7. Approval of Plan of Finance Resolution Concerning Financing of an Affordable Multifamily Residential Rental Apartment by the Escambia County Housing Finance Authority

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the Board for approval of a Plan of Finance Resolution approving the issuance by the Escambia County Housing Finance Authority of up to \$16 Million Multi-family Housing Revenue Bonds to finance the acquisition and rehabilitation of an affordable residential rental apartment project located in Gadsden County Florida and authorize the chairperson to execute the resolution.

Commissioner Green asked if they could give information in the future as to how the County could have its own housing authority and was told they would try to put together and get information to them.

Fran Jones, 4984 Alvin Dr., Pensacola, FL appeared before the Board to address issues. She said the developer was planning to put \$60,000 into each of the units. She said the County getting its own housing authority would give flexibility.

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

8. Point Milligan CEI Agreement

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a FDOT SCOP project.

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

9. Fairbanks Ferry CEI Agreement

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was also a FDOT SCOP project.

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

10. Potter Woodberry CEI Agreement

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a CIGP project funded by FDOT.

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

11. Approval of the Small County Outreach Program Agreement (SCOP) County Road 267A Spooner Road

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a SCOP project for the widening and resurfacing of County Road 267A, Spooner Road.

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

12. Approval of a New Agreement for the Fairbanks Ferry Road SCOP Construction Bid Award

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated there was a situation but everything has now ironed out.

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

13. Appointment/Re-appointment of Board Members to the Gadsden Hospital, Inc. Board of Directors

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for appointments or Re-appointment to the Gadsden Hospital, Inc. Board of Directors.

Commissioner Holt said they need to put this out and give people an opportunity to apply.

Commissioner NeSmith concurred with Commissioner Holt. He said he was only familiar with few of the names. He had questions about the hospital and the entire arrangement.

Commissioner Green asked how long it would take to get information out and asked if they were on a time deadline. Mr. Dixon said they do not meet on a regular basis and they have time.

Chair Viegbesie said he was going to say if others were interested, they need to apply. From what he was hearing it was the will of the Board is to advertise for citizens to apply and bring the item back.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ADVERTISE AND BRING THE ITEM BACK AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

14. Approval for the Gadsden Fire Service to Apply for the Assistance Firefighter Grant

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval for the Gadsden Fire Service to apply for the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND WITH A QUESTION.

Commissioner Holt asked if possible, in looking at the map, to get something on the map showing where fire stations are and also there needed to be an inventory done at each site.

Commissioner NeSmith said he forgot to ask earlier, the request for this equipment came from the Director of Fire Services. Mr. Dixon said that was correct.

CHAIR VIEGBESIE CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

15. Comcast Access to Gadsden Memorial Hospital

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was presented to the Board for approval to allow Comcast access to the Capital Regional Medical Center-Gadsden Campus premise that is leased to Capital Regional Medical.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

16. Gadsden County Facilities Management Software

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the Board for approval of the Dude Solution proposal. Mr. Knowles had comments.

Mr. Knowles said there will be minimal changes to this document. He asked they change venue requirements so the County would not have to travel there and add the Statement by Public Enemy crimes.

Chair Viegbesie asked if this was time sensitive and Mr. Knowles said they could table the item.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO TABLE THIS ITEM.

17. Approval of Agreement for Legislative Advocacy and Public Relations Services

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the agreement for a Gadsden County Legislative Advocacy and Public Relation Services. He said the Board of County Commissioners has retained lobbyists to represent the County interests for the past years in developing and implementing a State Legislative effort to enhance State level funding and services to Gadsden County.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR VIEGBESIE HAD A COMMENT BEFORE CARRYING THE VOTE.

He said before carrying the vote, he received a request from the lobbying firm, Stephen R. Winn and Associates to work with Lawson and Associates and would like to reach out to them to work together.

Commissioner Green said it was a great idea but asked what the fiscal impact would be because there was a \$25,000 allotment right now and would the Board have to increase the budget amount in order to accommodate the new firm?

Chair Viegbesie said that would be a discussion between Winn & Associates and Lawson & Associates.

Commissioner NeSmith said in reference to a query from Commissioner Green, Chair Viegbesie was forwarded information and that was a discussion they should have. The second question was there any reservation on the County's part for them to contract with Lawson and Associates, if it was all in order.

Mr. Knowles said moving forward yes, they need to make sure the lobbying firm was registered with the House (each year). Mr. Knowles said did not happen for the two prior years. Commissioner NeSmith wanted to understand the process, did that put the County in any legal problems? Mr. Knowles said he was not here for one of those years.

Commissioner Holt said she did not receive the email others received, she did her own investigative work. In 2018 they had another lobbyist so they did not have to register. She said to look at the years they got something and the years they did not, she was more concerned about when they did get something as to when they did not.

Chair Viegbesie said in hearing what he was hearing, he had no problem with approving this item contingent the registration for lobbying in Florida was done. If not, the contract becomes null and void.

CHAIR VIEGBESIE CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

18. Consideration of approval of the Agreement for Community Planning Technical Assistance (CTPA) Grant with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said this was approval of a CPTA agreement between Gadsden County and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for the purpose of updating the Gadsden County Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Element.

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

19. Approval of the Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Greensboro for Fire and Rescue Services

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of the Inter-local Fire and Rescue Service agreement between Gadsden County and the Town of Greensboro's Volunteer Fire Department for one year. He said he received an email from Council member Henderson stating they were unable to reach an agreement.

Mr. Dixon explained how some of funds were spent and said it did not raise any concerns.

Chair Viegbesie said he had a Speaker Request and an email that was received and requested to be read.

(A gentleman from the audience started talking and said he did not understand the process. Chair Viegbesie asked if he wished to speak on the item and he stated he wanted to speak on all items. Security escorted him out.)

Chair Holt said they were not trying to restrict anyone from speaking, she wanted to make sure he understood the process. Ms. Daniels stepped out to speak with him.

Dr. Joe Parramore appeared before the Board. He asked the record to reflect the Town of Greensboro has made no attempt to engage with the Volunteer Fire Department at any time. He submitted for the record the 2020 Department report. He wanted to address one allegation that was repeatedly made that those firefighters abandoned the Town of Greensboro; they would never abandon their call of service. To Commissioner Holt's request regarding equipment, he met with Chief Walker and gave his commitment that they would recover what equipment they could. Chief Walker had a meeting with Mr. Henderson and acquired an equipment list of equipment that was issued and signed for by town personnel. They extended another olive branch to the Town of Greensboro and have not heard back from them. They have never once reached out to seek an amicable agreement. In the packet under Background of staff's recommendation, it states that the Town of Greensboro is currently providing fire and rescue services within the scopes of training with due diligence in the unincorporated areas of Gadsden County. He stated that was not true.

Chair Viegbesie said he was heartbroken over this situation. He said the Administrator acknowledged there were expenditures made outside of fire and safety activities. His other concern and question were from what he had heard in Dr. Parramore's comments, who was currently providing Greensboro and surrounding areas with fire service.

Commissioner NeSmith said he was intimately knowledgeable of the issue; he has participated in meetings with Dr. Parramore, Mr. Hunter and their work was incredible. He also heard voices that they want their own fire services. He was hoping he could come to the meeting to hear they had come to an amicable agreement. However, the Town of Greensboro does maintain autonomy and they decide who they allow into their municipality.

Commissioner NeSmith said he would make a motion to support this document and approve it

Commissioner Green said his hope was great. However, he said he did not see it happening. His question to the Administrator was what was the purpose of the funding? He stated it had been used for other items, but was not illegal. He thought they were giving it to support fire services. He also was concerned if they were giving money for this, they do not have commitment from volunteers.

Commissioner Holt said what they had seen so far was implications of misuse of funds and missing equipment. If they could not go back and straighten that out, they have to move forward. She said Commissioner Green was asking for accountability and is what is in contract. She said to get a motion and second and move on.

Mr. Knowles pointed out two provisions in the contract that have been made. Section 8, the Records section, the Town of Greensboro shall maintain financial records of expenditures from the Town of Greensboro Fire Department within guidelines of the State of Florida Uniform

Accounting System for Local Governments, shall no later than the 10th day after the end of each quarter provide the County copies of the list of all Town of Greensboro Fire Department expenditures for the quarter and quarterly reports of fire activity within the unincorporated limits of the County in a form that is uniform throughout the County. He said also in the Payment of Funds Section 9, any and all payments made by the County and to the Town of Greensboro for the provision of fire and rescue services shall be used only for expenses of the Town of Greensboro's Fire Department and an accurate accounting of all funds is required. He said he was not sure how much micro-managing the County could do.

Commissioner Holt said it had in there about financial reporting and responsibility, they need to make sure that they have a report on the equipment.

Mr. Dixon said, as each Commissioner has said, the County has not been very accountable in maintaining certain records. One thing they have been talking about was tracking fire systems.

Chair Viegbesie said they were where they were, he gave his opinion, his concern was who was currently providing the citizens in Greensboro fire protection services.

Commissioner NeSmith said again, thanked Dr. Parramore and the former volunteers for bringing to Board's attention the issues.

COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH GREENSBORO AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. CHAIR VIEGBESIE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN OPPOSED THE ITEM.

20. Approval Request for Outside Employment

Item pulled

20b Appropriations Requests

Mr. Dixon introduced the added item and said it was for their approval of the recommended rankings of their Legislative program. He explained in order to meet the deadline, they do require that the Board rank the programs. He said they all agreed that Midway was in the worst way in terms of starting part of the septic-to-sewer program an enlarging the host facility. The convinced Midway to cut it down into slices.

Commissioner Hinson said he was curious, he was talking with Suwanee County, they were trying to start sewer plant. He said they had a lot of areas and thought they needed to start thinking about that to see if it was a good idea.

Commissioner Holt said she had listed they needed a County water sewer project but also need to look at operations of same. She said sewer does not make money, water and electricity makes money. She added it needed to be added in such an area because no-one wants to be next to a sewer plant.

Commissioner NeSmith said that was an excellent idea and thanked Commissioner Holt. He said this was a topic he wanted to discuss with the Board. He said in-line with them working on goals and objectives for Staff, they were in the first month of the Administrator's second year

and they needed to complete that process. In reference to Commissioner Holt's and Commissioner Hinson's comments, what stops them from providing their own water/sewer and electrical services?

Mr. Dixon said in the past when counties built utilities it was mostly water and sewer, it was involved with the developer and the county did not have the taste to manage those facilities and it was turned over to another government, Talquin. He said Talquin was a government essentially; it was a co-op.

Commissioner Green stepped out at 7:43 p.m.

Chair Viegbesie said Commissioner Hinson suggested a wonderful project and they need to prioritize their conversation.

Commissioner Green returned at 7:44 p.m.

Chair Viegbesie said this was for future conversation.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE LEGISLATIVE HANDOUT FOR 2021/2022 AND CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

CLERK OF COURT

21. Updates

Deputy Clerk said there was nothing to report.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

22. Updates

Mr. Dixon said he knew they would be traveling and they had the holiday schedule in front of them. They were expected to participate in the Friday evening parade.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

23. Updates

Mr. Knowles said he had nothing to report.

Commissioner Holt asked him on the annexation issue, she asked to be sent the email again from Opal. She said they need to have rules on accepting roads and annexations. She asked their responsibility right now.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

24. Report and Discussion of Public Issues

Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt asked about the flow chart on the road paving issue. She asked for the changes on Item 16 for the document and asked him to send to them so they could review.

Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1

Commissioner Hinson said he has brought this up over the years. It's getting cold and a lot of residents have mental health issues. He said they need to address the homeless issue in the County. He said they need to find ways to look at everything, tiny homes, etc. He said they need to hold these conversations. They also need to look at emergency housing programs.

He said they need to look at aides. Who does he send recommendation to, Mr. Dixon? He was told yes.

He said Dr. Walter Smith, FAMU, passed away and knew they would be doing something in Tampa and on the 15th of this month at Al Lawson Center. He said he would like to have proclamation.

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

He thanked Coach Willie Simmons for having an awesome season this year.

He asked about Jarvis Rittman and Mr. Dixon said they asked to wait until the end of the season.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned the booster shot and flu shot, thanked the community for getting their shots. Chair Viegbesie said he also had had the pneumonia shot.

He thanked Gadsden County for being strong and said they need to pray for the children of the county.

Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3

Commissioner NeSmith echoed what Commissioner Hinson just stated and thanked all the Commissioners for keeping them in good light with the media.

He said regarding the homeless issue, Gretna Commissioner Jeff McNealy, has coordinated and organized a group of stake holders in community to address the homelessness.

Commissioner Hinson said they also started an initiative, Gadsden County Collaborative that Commissioner Holt was a part of.

Commissioner NeSmith said they need to schedule another workshop to conclude their goals and objectives for 2022. Chair Viegbesie said they also need one on the CARES Act and one on the American Rescue Plan. He said they also need one strictly on economic development.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked Jeremiah Lee, Public Works, for keeping (inaudible) on Lincoln Drive. He has not seen debris, mattresses or tires in that area.

He thanked Mr. Dixon for working with the citizens on Hardaway Highway regarding the barking dogs.

He wished Commissioner Green a happy belated birthday and congratulated him on his engagement.

Commissioner Ronterious Green, Vice Chair, District 5

Commissioner Green thanked each of them that did celebrate with him Saturday.

He wanted to start with the workshop he requested on the SHIP program. He said they need to take advantage of whatever programs they have available to meet the needs of their constituents.

Also, he had on his list animal control and was told it was hard to get in touch with Animal Control.

He asked if there was an update on Old Federal Road and understood more cars were still coming in.

Mr. Dixon said they reached out, it was one of those situations where they are going to have to be diligent in their process. The property owner has not heeded County warning in Chattahoochee or here. He said they were remaining diligent in following their process.

He said they talked about this and a while back trying to get information on security of the building. Mr. Dixon said they still have that money set aside. He asked Mr. Meeks to come forward.

Allan Meeks, Facilities Manager, appeared before the Board. He said they have a layout Justin Ford has done.

Commissioner Holt said she left one thing off and wanted an update on the COVID memorial.

Commissioner Hinson stepped out at 8:14 p.m.

Commissioner Holt wanted people to know they did care.

She said she was also still getting questions regarding the hospital.

Commissioner Anthony O. Viegbesie, Chair, District 2

Chair Viegbesie echoed what everyone has said in congratulations.

He said he received a message today from an affiliation to the Governor's Office regarding \$2.5 Million EMS building. All they need to do now is to spend the money and have the invoice and will get the money. He said this was for all fiscally distressed rural counties. He said as they approve the improvements, submit the invoice and we would receive the money.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
December 7, 2021 – Regular Meeting

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VEIGBESIE DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:17 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

**ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair
Board of County Commissioners**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk