

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MARCH 15, 2022 AT 4:30 P.M.,
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5 – appeared by phone
Eric Hinson, District 1
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3
Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4
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 workshop to order at 4:45 p.m. He asked Ms. Blackshear to give the Invocation and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to 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 March 15, 2022. 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.

Commissioner NeSmith read the above statement aloud.

James Anderson

Shirley Marshall

Cassie Bowen

Marie Alday

Rosa Harrison

Josephine Hunter-Robinson

Latasha T. Murray, General Contractor

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Discussion regarding the Gadsden County Affordable Housing Program

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item.

Chair Viegbesie said there were some speakers that had requested time to speak and he asked to let the presenters speak first in case they answered any questions there might be.

Justin Stiell, Growth Management Director, appeared before the Board and said the Board had requested a workshop regarding this item.

The Florida Sadowski Act is Chapter 201 of Florida Statutes; creates a dedicated source of revenue for affordable housing from a portion of documentary stamp taxes on the transfer of real estate, 30% to the State Housing Trust Fund and 70% to the local Government Housing Trust Fund. Funding often utilized by the Legislature in other budget areas to fill gaps.

Sonya Burns, Housing Coordinator, appeared before the Board and gave the Mission Statement.

Current assistance plan does not allow them to go above 140%. They will be requesting the Board adopt that they be able to go up to maximum of 141% to be able to assist more citizens.

- Purchase assistance max is \$15,000;
- Emergency Repair max is \$10,000-anything above need administration approval
- Owner occupied rehabilitation/replacement max is \$60,000 - \$80,000 max without BCC approval; anything over must come back to the Board for approval
- Foreclosure Prevention max is \$5,000
- Disaster Relief/Mitigation max is \$10,000
- Offer homeownership Counseling Classes quarterly and they are virtual

Partner agencies and additional funding including rental assistance are:

- Catholic Charities
- Capital Area Community Action Agency
- US Department of Agriculture Rural Development
- United Way of Big Bend

Fiscal year 17/18 has been approved and closed out by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation; Fiscal year 18/19 as been approved and closed out; Fiscal year 19/20 received maximum allocation of \$350,000 and the current balance for 19/20 is \$172,987.38. Funds have been allocated to several approved sites.

There is currently under construction 10 units through HHRP.

There is a current balance remaining of \$456,409.43.

They have been given the task of doing 40 homes. The next step is the creation of Gadsden County Local Housing Authority.

They will also be presenting to the Administration the creation of the Gadsden County Homelessness Committee and will be applying for the CDBG HR grant.

Commissioner Hinson said this was good information but wanted the constituents to have first opportunity rather than the developer who might be from California.

Mr. Dixon said one thing he found out and did not know when they went to the Florida Housing Finance Agency, was the majority of their program comes through developers and we did not, as a County, qualify for that money. He added what they have since found out, how they write their rules and how they set themselves up to deal with developers is as important as the who the developers are. A lot of the investment in single family housing and multifamily housing from the state comes through developers.

Ms. Burns said they will be having a workshop with all the local developers. She then showed some of the success stories through the SHIP program and the HHRP program.

Commissioner Hinson asked if when they build homes for seniors, were the restrooms handicap compliant? Ms. Burns said anyone over the age of 62 years receives that service.

Commissioner Hinson said they have a lot of people and there will be influx of people moving out because of high rent throughout Florida. He added he was a friend of developers and there are a lot of people that have a funding source who are buying homes throughout the County and would sell them. He said since they own the land, go after citizens first before developers. Ms. Burns said that would be something to be addressed in creating the land database.

James Anderson, 205 S. Shadow Street, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board and said Ms. Burns had him a nice house built on Shadow Street and he was very happy with it. Ms. Gloria (sister) said his home was a total loss because a tree fell on his home during the hurricane.

Shirley Marshall, 252 Frank Jackson Road, Quincy, FL, appeared before the Board and thanked everyone involved with getting her a new house, her house was messed up by the hurricane.

Cassie Bowen, 100 Pine Street, Chattahoochee, FL appeared before the Board and sang the praises of the Housing Department.

Commissioner Green said he was overjoyed in what he was hearing about the Housing Department.

Marie Alday, 227 E. 10th Street, Greensboro, FL appeared before the Board and was appreciative of her home. Before her house was remodeled, in the winter her like bill would be between five and \$600 a month. And

Josephine Hunter-Robinson, 908 1st St. SE, Havana, FL appeared before the Board and said a tree fell on her trailer in 2018. Friend told her about Sonya and she really helped her. So thankful for the help and more in Havana need the help. She added it was wonderful to have a home to go to that had heat and air conditioning.

Commissioner Hinson said Ms. Hunter-Robinson had a heart of gold.

Latasha T. Murray, TNT Construction, General Contractor, 14705 Main Street, Gretna, FL appeared before the Board and said she was a general contractor and realtor. She said

construction costs were sky high. They do all they can to save money for the clients. If the Commissioners can help the program and bring more money, please do. She said currently construction cost are between \$125 to \$135 square foot.

Commissioner Holt said a housing authority would make a big difference in applying for funds. They will need more people to help. When doing this, they need to give local preference to contractors, need to pass procedures and get something in place.

Commissioner NeSmith said they had a great February, but in listening to the speakers, he has too many questions to continue, they need to have a continuation of this workshop.

Commissioner Green said he heard and wanted to echo comments of the other Commissioners. He said this was so needed for the County and he has a lot of questions and will get with Ms. Burns.

Chair Viegbesie echoed what everyone else has said.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VIEGBESIE DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:53 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk