

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MAY 3, 2022, THE FOLLOWING
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Chair, District 2**
 Ronterious “Ron” Green, Vice Chair, District 5
 Eric Hinson, District 1
 Kimblin NeSmith, District 3
 Brenda Holt, District 4
 Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
 Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
 Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Viegbesie welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The Invocation was given by Rev. Vivian Grant from Richbay African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Chair then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. flag.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Dixon said he would like to add under Awards, Presentations and Appearances a Proclamation to be presented for Older Americans’ Month. He also would like to pull Item 4 from the Consent Agenda and move it to General Business as Item 5A and add 5B Approval of Letter of Support for the Havana Community Development Center.

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

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES

The board presented a Proclamation honoring Seniors and recognized that May is Older Americans Month. Chair Viegbesie read aloud the Proclamation and it was then presented to Ms. Jennifer Pollack of the Gadsden County Senior Center.

Commissioner Holt asked for a Proclamation for the other Senior Citizen groups in Midway, Chattahoochee and Gretna.

CONSENT

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

- 1. Ratification Memo**

- 2. Approval of Minutes**
 - **November 16, 2021 Veteran’s Monument Workshop**
 - **March 15, 2022 – Affordable Housing Program Workshop**

3. **Approval of Funding from the Gadsden County Law Enforcement Education Fund (LEEF) for the Injury and Death Investigation CJSTC#036 Training**
4. ~~Approval of Resolution 2022-013 Grant Budget Amendments for FY 2022~~
Item moved to 5a

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 January 18, 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.

Rosetta Hylton-Rolle Anderson and Kim Gilmore from Donate Life Florida appeared before the Board to thank them for lighting up the Courthouse in April for Donate Life Month.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

GENERAL BUSINESS

5. **Potter Woodberry Road Supplemental Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

5a. **Approval of Resolution 2022-013 Grant Budget Amendments for FY 2022**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND COMMISSIONER HINSON ASKED FOR A BRIEF SYNOPSIS.

Mr. Dixon explained they were budget amendments for a FRDAP grant, a SCOP grant for Spooner Road, a Small County EOC design grant and a CDBG-DR grant of \$2.5 million. He explained every time they receive new money, they have to amend the budget to show where it has come in and this seeks that approval.

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

5b. **Request for Letter of Support for Havana Community Development Corporation**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a request from the Havana Community Development Corporation, Inc. for a letter of support.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HOLT HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner Holt asked why this did not come before the Board.

Chair Viegbesie said he understood the Congressman contacted them outside of the meeting and asked them to submit the application with a Letter of Support.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if this item was included on the dais and was told yes.

Commissioner Holt said she did support this, she just wanted to get an organized process.

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

6. Clinical Internship Agreements with Area Colleges

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for board approval for Clinical Internship agreements with various colleges in the area.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AN COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

7. Approval of Construction-Educational & Vocational Building

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval to construct an Educational and Vocational Training Center on the grounds of the Gadsden County Sheriff's Office Correctional Facility for inmates to help reduce recidivism. It is designed to offer training courses for inmates at the Gadsden County Correctional Facility and will be funded 100% by the Inmate Welfare Fund.

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

Commissioner Hinson asked if they could have more discussion because the community may have questions.

Col. Barkley with the Gadsden County Sheriff's Office appeared before the Board to explain the item.

Commissioner Holt said she visited one over by Pensacola and they did a lot of job training so when the inmates got out, they had basic job training. She said also while they were in the facility, they were able to go to job sites and work and earn money.

Commissioner Hinson thanked Col. Barkley and stated he had metamorphosized the jail.

Col. Barkley said Mr. Dixon was the one that actually started this program when he worked at the jail.

Rev. Gaines appeared before the board and spoke with the group thanking the Board for work they were doing in the Friendship Community regarding a Neighborhood Watch program.

8. Approval of the Purchase of the Mobile Medical Health Unit

Mr. Dixon said the Board agreed to purchase a mobile medical unit on behalf of the Community Health Council and the opportunity is before them and citizens will start seeing the bus out and about in the different communities.

Commissioner Holt thanked the Administrator and said when they were discussing this a few years ago, this was something that when people come to town, they could visit the mobile health unit. It will not be just for COVID, it will be for anyone that needed health care. She asked if it will belong to the County and Mr. Dixon said for all intents and purposes, it will belong to the Gadsden County Health Council because the grant is with the Health Council. She asked if the Health Council dissolved, where would the health unit go and Mr. Dixon said he did not know. She said her personal feeling was this should go under the Board.

Mr. Dixon explained the Health Council does a number of things and has multiple groups involved.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND SECOND WAS MADE BY CHAIR VIEGBESIE.

Commissioner NeSmith said from listening to Commissioner Holt's comments, it created some additional clouds and wanted to make sure he understood. He said the health unit would belong to the Health Council. Mr. Dixon said the grant was to the Health Council, Commissioner NeSmith said that was an entity of the Board and Mr. Dixon said it was independent of the Board.

Commissioner Holt said the reason she asked the questions was to get clarity and they did. The Health Council is doing what they were asked to do.

Commissioner NeSmith said the Health Council was an independent entity the Board set up and the Board does not interact and Mr. Dixon said they interact all the time.

Commissioner Hinson said it was similar to GCDC, was a nonprofit organization and if they decided they did not want to work with the Board, they could stop at any time and say thank you. He said he had a few questions; they have had this conversation a few times. Commissioner Holt and Mr. Dixon stated it will be the County Commissioners' mobile unit. Chair Viegbesie said if he understood his concerns, it was the same concerns the Clerk had in his email. Commissioner Hinson said the Board gave \$400,000 to this organization; they gave \$75,000 from the American Rescue Plan, \$225,000 and said Commissioner Holt signed a contract on October 18th.

Chair Viegbesie said this money is reimbursable and would not cost the County anything.

Commissioner Hinson said he had valid concerns and was on point. They approved to pay for this in October and asked the difference between then and now, was the money already spent? He said Commissioner Holt gave an interview on Channel 27 and they said in the

article, the Gadsden County Health Council has been given \$400,000 to start their mobile medical unit after the 2021 legislative session. He asked if they received the funding, why was the Board paying additional funding?

Mr. Dixon said most of the money that came to the Council, came in and went out for the fight of COVID. The Health Council was the vessel used to rapidly give information out in the fight for COVID. The Health Council is the agency to move quickly on the Board's behalf and most of the money is passed through. They also provided free medicine for the citizens if they qualify. They also gave \$75,000 and that was to power the board and operationalize the bus if there was no other funding.

Commissioner Hinson said last year between May-June, \$75,000 went towards the bus. Last year in October they gave \$225,000 or \$250,000 for the mobile unit. Did they receive the \$400,000 or how much did they receive out of that?

Mr. Dixon said if he was speaking to the grant, the Health Council was only able to draw down for the service provided. Only about \$40,000-\$60,000 of that money has been spent for the mobile unit. The only reason the Council asked for this to be fronted, they do not have that money to purchase.

Commissioner Holt said this was really not the issue because they set the Health Council up to do this. They put the money in, they purchase the unit, they go out in the community and do the work. Instead of looking at the where's and whys, they need to be applying for more money in order to get more funding. It was a simple process. The other stuff about what shed and should not be done would have to be looked at the next time, they need to apply for more money to keep it going until we get a hospital.

Commissioner Hinson said Commissioner Holt has said if the Chamber did not come presented to the Board, they should not receive funding. There are a lot of questions here. He said in every meeting, Commissioner Holt and Mr. Dixon said the County should own the unit. He said they could abandon the unit at any time. He felt they need to have and a conversation with the Health Council.

Chair Viegbesie asked if there was a motion and the Deputy Clerk said yes.

Commissioner Hinson continued and said he cared about the seniors and citizens of the county, he was for this but wanted to make sure they were compliant. He asked if they had a signed copy of the Grant agreement. Mr. Knowles said he received it today.

Chair Viegbesie said this was something they started, and may not like the way it was going right now and will not be costing the board.

Mr. Dixon said there are costs, there are deliverables to this grant that have time limits. If the bus is not purchased beginning this month the grant will be docked 10% and there will be costs each month.

Commissioner Hinson said was not our fault this was coming the day of and was an executive problem. He asked who the agreement was with, the Health Council or the Board and FDOH.

Mr. Knowles said the contract was between GCHC and FDOH. Commissioner Hinson asked about (in reference to the Clerk's email) the August 17, 2021 agreement.

Mr. Dixon said the agreement has never been with the County. The County is requesting funding for the Health Council, this was the same as HCDC asking for a letter of support for funding.

Commissioner Hinson said Mr. Dixon received the email same as he did and asked if the Clerk got something wrong?

Mr. Dixon said it was hard to believe but the Clerk may be mistaken.

Mr. Dixon said this contract came before them a number of times to store the unit. That is the deliverable that is needed to be met and they agreed to store and house the unit at that time. Commissioner Holt asked if the vehicle would be a County vehicle and he told her no. The agreement is with GCHC.

Mr. Dixon said the requirement is to be purchased by date, not to be delivered date.

Chair Viegbesie said there is the \$225,000 and \$75,000. The \$75,000 he recalled they fronted to the Health Council from the American Rescue Plan and also gave money to the Sheriff's Office. The \$250,000, even though they are loaning to the health council the disbursement is proof that some of money has been spent.

Commissioner Hinson said he was reading directly from the Clerk's email and constituents deserve to hear what is being said. He said it was understood by the Board that they would have ownership of the unit. How did everything change now? There was further discussion around the dais.

Commissioner Holt said she put a and motion in to call the question but if they could go ahead and vote, she would rescind her motion.

Chair Viegbesie said the motion is rescinded and started to call for the vote and Mr. Dixon interrupted. Mr. Dixon said they need to move the money and take the money from the General Fund.

COMMISSIONER HOLT AMENDED HER MOTION TO MOVE MONEY FROM THE GENERAL FUND IN ORDER TO PURCHASE THE MOBILE UNIT WITH THE REIMBURSEMENT ELEMENT AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE CHAIR CALLED FOR THE VOTE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON STATED HE HAD A QUESTION. COMMISSIONER HOLT SAID FOR THE CHAIR TO CARRY THE MOTION. CHAIR VIEGBESIE SAID THE PROPER THING WOULD BE IF HE DID NOT SUPPORT THE MOTION TO NOT VOTE FOR IT. COMMISSIONER HINSON SAID HE DID NOT SUPPORT THE ENTIRE MOTION, HE SUPPORTED GETTING THE MOBILE UNIT BUT DID NOT SUPPORT THE PROCESS OF IT. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.

Mr. Dixon said for clarity, they did give the Council \$75,000 for the operation of the mobile unit. All previous money has been for the fight against COVID.

CLERK OF COURT

9. Updates

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

10. Updates

Mr. Dixon asked for a Proclamation for Public Works Week.

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

Mr. Dixon asked for a Proclamation for EMS Week.

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

Mr. Dixon said they were moving on grants in terms of the Emergency Operation Center and putting forward as a placeholder the Correctional Complex as the home, however they are looking at other opportunities for siting of it and other new County facilities.

Chair Viegbesie said he wanted to bring to his attention, when driving on Pt. Milligan Road, he saw they had started working on the widening and resurfacing of the road, however there are heaps of trash along the road and suggested it be picked up so construction is not obstructed. Mr. Dixon said citizens need to be mindful and careful along that road because they are placing big pieces of concrete for the project.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

11. Updates

Mr. Knowles said Mrs. Bradley contacted them regarding the scheduling of an Executive Session and the date will be Tuesday, May 10th at 4:00 p.m. and the insurance Council has requested a Special meeting after the shade meeting at 5:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONER GREEN SAID SO MOVED AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

12. Report and Discussion of Public Issues

Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt said she was not trying to badger the Administrator tonight but the reason she asked the questions was she has had some calls. She did not know who asked the Clerk for this but if the Clerk sends out a letter, he should be at the meeting so he could answer some of the questions and they could ask him themselves. She said she did not know who would ask

the Clerk questions, but they need to know how the interest on the county's money is being invested; what is the amount of interest being invested as of this year; in which funds are they invested; how much is invested in each fund; what are the institutions of investment; which bank holds the county funds for that. She said that needed to be looked at carefully in case of a major recession, they need to have the money invested in more than one bank.

She said she talked with two pastors and they are impressed with the Board and with the Administration. Commissioner Holt said to Commissioner Hinson she had no idea about some of the information that he said she said and was not going to try to figure it out. She only knew what she said and when she makes a statement she sticks by her statement.

Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1

Commissioner Hinson said he was going by what the Clerk asked and it was not an attack on anybody. If funding it's going out, they need to make sure they were in line with what it is out there.

He said he had two people call him today regarding having issues with refurbishing their homes, ramps, etc. They used to have money and they abolished that a few years ago. They have a lot of leaking roofs in the County. He proposed to the Board they give each commissioner \$50,000.

Commissioner Green stepped out at 7:49 p.m.

He said each Commissioner would have funds and could send residents to the office to SEE if they qualify. He asked the Board to create an agenda item for the next meeting for a vote on the next meeting.

Commissioner Green returned at 7:50 p.m.

Chair Viegbesie stepped out at 7:51 p.m.

He stated he would like to bring this in the next two weeks to the Board for the Emergency Housing Program to refurbish houses and put IN \$50,000.

He said staff was doing a wonderful job, has been hearing great things and they are putting people first and thanked them. He had someone call him last week and he called staff and have not got return call and it is about the legislative aides' position, he had someone interested. Mr. Dixon asked if he called HR and he said he called last week and has had no return call.

Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3

Commissioner NeSmith said to follow-up comments just made by Commissioner Hinson, he went to Bradwell Mortuary and passed on condolences to Jeronda Robinson and her sister for the loss of their father.

He also sent heartfelt well wishes to Commissioner Green for his sister, who had a medical condition last week.

Chair Viegbesie returned at 7:55 p.m.

He sent out congratulations to Sawdust community for the great work they are doing in that area and revitalizing the Sawdust Park.

He thanked the members of the Martin L. King committee for providing lunch today and said it was fantastic.

He thanked the Chair and commissioners for creating a holistic and inviting atmosphere at commission building.

Mr. Dixon said to piggyback on his point, he thanked them for presenting the to the atmosphere and staff believes they are looking after them. He thanked them for providing such an atmosphere.

He further stated, he was not proposing a message board as large as what was on the Courtyard, he just would like a messaging board on the Courthouse lawn that could be seen from east to west.

He said the people of Gadsden County wanted to recommend a development of a new ordinance that would require the Chair make a State of Gadsden County address each year at a designated time after the Presidential Address, possibly sometime in March.

He said in closing he wanted to close out with a comment made by Commissioner Hinson regarding legislative aides, he had an opportunity to meet with the County Administrator and the Director of Human Resources and was asked if they had someone in mind and they informed HR they want to open it to the public. The recommendation was made that it be brought to the Board for discussion but as Commissioner Hinson stated earlier, they're ready to move forward with legislative aides and hurt record start advertising for the positions.

Mr. Dixon said he did not recall the Board voting, it was an individual Commissioner's choice.

Commissioner Holt said they must advertise the position because it is government money and the Commissioners should not pick and choose. She said she did not agree with aides in the first place but felt it should be open to the public and anyone could apply. She said she was not going to change what she said because she felt it was a mis-use of government funds.

Commissioner Hinson said at the time, Commissioner NeSmith felt he wanted an aide. He talked with other commissioners throughout the country and other commissioners do not advertise. He said they say one thing and do another thing and stated with no disrespect to the Administrator, Commissioner Holt picked him, selected him without him applying and it was not advertised. They picked him the same day after they had gone through the process.

Chair Viegbesie said in Leon County, each Commissioner determines their aide and it then goes through HR to get the paperwork done. He said he did not think they really needed aides but new in other counties they select their aides and then HR goes through the process but this was something they needed to discuss.

Commissioner Holt said Commissioner Hinson echoed her name to death tonight and said Commissioner Hinson voted for Mr. Dixon. She said she did not put him in office, she put in a motion and the Board voted on it. She said they had advertised the position several times. She said they could not settle the contract and if they lost the Interim County Administrator, there would be no-one.

Commissioner NeSmith said he did not mention aides for it to take this direction. The only point they wanted to make was to not remove the decision of who the aide is from the Commissioner but to look at the applicant pool and be a part of the interview process.

Commissioner Ron Green

Commissioner Green said he had also been receiving a lot of phone calls in reference to housing and people needing assistance and did meet with Ms. Sonya Burns informed him of the rural development direct home repair program application, which if a person was 62 years and above, could apply for a \$7,500 grant that could alleviate some of the things such as doors, ramps, etc. and if more was needed, they would allow a process to happen to where they could assess the needs and give them a caseworker that could possible help them qualify for a low interest loan. He added they were trying to find every avenue possible to be a help to the community.

He gave a thank you to Our Florida and staff for coming out on Sunday to New Life Ministries to present the Our Florida Assistance for the rental and utility assistance and had approximately 60 families that were facing evictions that they were going to be able to help.

He made a request for a Proclamation for Ms. Josephine Johnson, who just retired from Publix. She said she worked 51 years there.

COMMISSIONER HOLT SAID SO MOVED AND CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

And he asked for a schedule for the mowing in the districts.

Mr. Dixon said in reference to the grass cutting, Mr. Lee informed him today that even though they were ordered last year, they will be getting in the new tractors next week.

Commissioner Anthony O. Viegbesie, Chair, District 2

Chair Viegbesie said with the Housing department, if she could put together a packet and what they do to give to the Commissioners so they could distribute to citizens to inform them what would be available would be a good thing.

He said for the citizens who use Pt. Milligan Road, they were about to start the widening and have concrete barriers on the side of the road and asked they be careful in driving on the road.

CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO REQUEST A RESOLUTION FOR TWO INDIVIDUALS, CHARLIE SHAW AND ARTHUR BODISON AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Receipt and File

UPCOMING MEETINGS

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VIEGBESIE DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:22 PM.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk