

**AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON JUNE 27, 2022 AT  
4:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING  
WAS HAD, VIZ:**

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

**Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Green welcomed everyone to the workshop. The Invocation was done by Chair Green. He then led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance of the U.S. Flag.

**Citizens Requesting to be Heard on Non-Agenda Items (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](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until noon on June 27, 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 Hinson read the above statement.

**General Business**

**1. Discussion of Federal and State Grant Awards and Potential Awards to Gadsden County for Public Safety Facilities**

Mr. Dixon started with the presentation. He stated they were given grants over the past couple of months and at least three of them are coming to fruition. They are having to identify properties so that they can begin accepting the grants and begin the engineering process. All three are what they refer to the EOC grant for a total of \$10 million and the emergency medical services grant. What were in essence three very different grants, three different buildings, they sought to collectively put them in a single location. They have been told no because the grants are very different and given for different reasons. The Sheriff and his team and others reached out. They have had a couple of meetings with the honorable secretaries of those departments.

*Commissioner Holt walked in at 4:10pm.*

Mr. Dixon stated how they can maintain it and improve it. He said hopefully they can build them in a way to make them able and capable of having great foundations for the future.

He referred everyone to the information provided. He said they have six grants and he said Tashonda Whaley from Emergency Management, Cheri Keiler from Integrity, Steve Wynn from the Sheriff's Department, Engineer Justin Ford, Architect Joe Sampson are all present. They have begun a weekly meeting to discuss all the grants to manage them the best way they can and be efficient. Efficiently began how can they co-locate the facilities. He said they have been looking high and low for locations. They have come across the cities industrial part, which encompasses hundreds of acres and for the most part is flat, and they have an opportunity to co-locate a number of facilities there. He wants them to look at what they are doing in terms of locations and decide if they are going in the proper way.

Mr. Dixon wants to look at what they are doing in terms of locations. He understands it is a workshop, but it's to be in full awareness of what is being done in their name in terms of development of the locations.

He passed out a drawing that Mr. Ford gave him. He said within the \$10 million the county has been allotted; he foresees the ability to build a Sheriff's Department within it. With Emergency Services, they were granted funds to be located at the Health Department and he sees the opportunity to co-locate in a place and space where it should be near other emergency services. That is if the funders agreed that these things can happen.

He referred to the plan that was passed out. He said no engineers or architects have been accomplished yet. They really need to start running to procure architects and engineers to really draw and design what will happen. They have looked at a number of locations and some locations are not available to them.

Mr. Dixon walked through the grants. The first grant is the CDBGDR EMS grant for \$2.5 million. It is to rehab and renovate the existing facility they have in the Health Department. He said it doesn't take a lot to see that place is really not where it belongs.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 4:19 p.m.*

He said given the type of work they do, it becomes a great opportunity to be placed with the Sheriff's office and with the Emergency Operations Center, if they will allow them not to retrofit a building or to retrofit a building attached to a new building. They have asked them if it is possible. He said not only can they get more building but better space. This is the fastest moving grant they have and it is in play right now. Not long ago they gave a contract to Integrity to manage part of this grant so they are moving quickly with this grant.

The second grant is the hurricane safe room. It requires a match of 25% which they know of. This grant is to design a hurricane safe room. He doesn't know if they are rehabilitating or building a new one. Commissioner Holt said they are building a new one. He said it is \$4.9 million they are working through right now.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 4:21 p.m.*

He said the third one is the Emergency Operations Center. They already have a grant of \$200,000 for design only and they have until December to complete that grant.

In addition, they have received the \$10 million grant. He referred them to page 5 of 15, to the state legislature grant. He said they asked for \$33 million and the Governor and the Legislature were kind enough to give them \$10 million of that for the design and construction of the

Emergency Operations Center and the Public Safety Complex. They quickly realized they cannot do it on the properties currently own. They don't have enough space, it's not in the right location, and if they own something, there is no water there. To get the pieces that they currently own up would require more time to prep the spaces than the grant allotted time. The properties they have put forward will meet their needs and allows them to design and build a beautiful location that is functional. So, they are looking at how to make the dollars go further and do more.

He said they were just asked and it his understanding that the board doesn't want to give back any money. This is \$460,000 that they just said yes on their behalf to retrofit the hospital and to harden the hallways of the hospital. They want to retrofit it as a special needs shelter that brings retrofit dollars. The opportunity allows them to get a jump start. It creates the opportunity for a generator, doors, and windows, but for \$460,000, it is a lot of money. The state and others were kind in the conversations with them and said to start the job. He believes they need to start the work and take in as much opportunity as they can. Those facilities can be used as something else when they are not being used as shelters.

He said they requested that this month. He explained the drawing design of the COVID shelter. He said the legislative season is upon us again. He met with Quincy and talked about who got money and when Quincy gets ready, they are ready to get out and help. He said the same thing to Greensboro and Greensboro didn't get any money. He said Quincy got about \$30,000 but they are going to make sure that every city has the opportunity to get to the table.

*Commissioner Nesmith stepped out at 4:29 p.m.*

He said the thing about the saferoom, it has to be one big room. It must immediately go into being what it needs to be. They have to design the purpose and functionality of these buildings when they are not shelters. On page 11 of 15 is the design for the Emergency Operations Center. These are initial designs as Shovel Ready Programs.

On page 12 of 15 is a second story. This is a potential Sheriff's Office. One of things they were talking about is totally consolidating dispatch. He said after seeing what happened in Uvalde, they have got to talk to each other. There can only be one method of conversation. Some cities have their own dispatch center. In an emergency, they want the call to go to the center then to the cop. They have to make sure they are getting the hint.

*Commissioner Nesmith returned at 4:33 p.m.*

The next page is the hospitals floor plan. There is the opportunity to improve it now not tomorrow. They firmly believe that it is a beginning and not an ending. If it is out there, will do their best to get it.

The \$1.7 million is for the cafeteria and was approved in 2021. They are working with DEO and staffing up to make these things happen. He has been advised that they need a construction manager and engineers as the Board requested. They will bring the best people to the table in an effective amount of time.

Chair Green stated have been given an overview. His first question was in regards to what is the time frame to select a site for the facility? Mr. Dixon said they are in that zone now and don't have a date now. The engineers and architects can only draw to what's there based on the dirt they can see. Commissioner Green asked if the conversation has been started with the City of

Quincy in reference to the Joe Adams site. Mr. Dixon said based on the feedback he receives tonight; it will be on the agenda tomorrow night if things are positive.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked why they keep referring to the shelter as COVID shelter, when he hopes COVID will not be here forever. He wants to change the name to infections disease shelter. That will cover every health disaster that comes our way. It is a recommendation from him. He didn't understand the rendering of the sheriff's complex and he asked how much was the Sheriff's input solicited in order to come up with that rendering? Mr. Dixon said the Sheriff has been very active in the design. He will check to make sure the name of the shelter is not a part of the grant. Mr. Dixon said they are trying to keep the clarity as to why the money was given there.

Commissioner Hinson said it is the first time he sees this today so he can't give feedback. He said he needs to do more research on the \$1.7 million because he remembers that the \$1.7 million just wasn't for just the building but for the entire space. So, he wants to make sure he's accurate if he makes a decision. He said he would like for them to take a tour of those 52 buildings that is not occupied so when he gives information to the people it will be accurate. Mr. Dixon said he didn't say they were not occupied, he said that the County owns. Commissioner Hinson asked how many buildings they have? He said it would be great once he reads it because there are a lot of opportunities in it. He said he would like to know how much land they own for tourist grants? In Havana they talked about refurbishing the river off of Iron Bridge Road. It would be a good tool to bring people into Gadsden County. He said he knows they are putting millions of dollars into the park for Pat Thomas Parkway, but they have more rivers than that. Mr. Dixon said he just had staff compile every piece of property the County owns and it is years of compiling properties. He said yes, they could have some shining stars in there that could be for their best use. Commissioner Hinson said he would like to add more parks throughout Gadsden County. He said the City of Midway is 10 minutes from the airport and Tallahassee has grown so much that people are moving out of Tallahassee and they may need a center for others to come and be a part of. They thought of a small civic center, like in Atlanta. They could benefit from Tallahassee just from that alone.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he has had the opportunity to tour the sites. They have more developed property than he imagined. He said, as a nice gesture, if those inventories of developed land that the County has, if it's something he can arrange a tour for the commissioners. He was amazed at what they have.

Chair Green said he was also going to ask for a tour to see in reality what they have in the County.

Commissioner Nesmith wanted to make sure he followed the grant and the buildings. He asked about the CDBG grant and asked if that building was damaged? Mr. Dixon said the building EMS was in was damaged. They moved into the Health Department. Commissioner Nesmith asked if they will relocate? Mr. Dixon said hopefully they will go into a new building. Commissioner Nesmith asked if the \$2.5 million was to renovate the building. Mr. Dixon said it was and they are asking now to build a new building. If so, they have a potential location on the map. Mr. Dixon said with the savings that they are inviting from the other opportunities; he believes they can accomplish the goal. Commissioner Nesmith asked if the \$4.9 million dollars is for the construction for the Stevens school. Mr. Dixon said it was. Commissioner Nesmith asked if the Emergency operations center is another building on property owned by Quincy? Mr. Dixon said no, currently the Emergency Operations Center is in the Sheriff's Office. Mr.

Mr. Dixon clarified it is proposed by Quincy.

Commissioner Hinson said since the City of Quincy is not using the property, can they just purchase the property? Chair Green said it depends on the conversation. Commissioner Nesmith asked about the Emergency Operations Center and if it would also house the jail? Mr. Dixon said no, the jail will still be the jail. It was proposed to be housed on grounds at the jail. Chair Green said the reason for the larger space, is because when they designed it, they designed it for about 20 parks. That was on the facility where the jail is now, they were hoping for more space.

Commissioner Holt said, for the first grant, they are possibly discussing having the EMS moved where? Mr. Dixon said to Joe Adams Road. Commissioner Holt asked if the drive time from there to the hospital to Tallahassee increasing? Mr. Dixon said no, where they are located is not about the drive time. It's literally a two-minute drive from there to the hospital. Mr. Dixon said it gives them the opportunity to have a nice facility. Commissioner Holt said she knows what it does, and she's not speaking against it. She said when you look at healthcare, you look at ETA. Mr. Dixon said he doesn't think it lowers their ability to go north or south, east or west. Commissioner Holt said back to her point, she is looking at the healthcare in the eastside. She said it may be a good idea, she just wants it to be considered.

*Commissioner Nesmith stepped out at 4:56 p.m.*

Commissioner Holt said it may be a good idea, she is not debating it. She said hopefully they are looking at getting a new building out of that money. She asked for the plan for the present location? Mr. Dixon said they are looking for other opportunities. Commissioner Holt said on the \$1.7 million for the shelter, she is about leaving it the same because they convinced the legislature that it is for COVID so they could get the money. When COVID is over, it can be used for other things. She asked for the restrictions on the \$1.7 million. Mr. Dixon said it is just for the location. Ms. Daniels said it is to retrofit. Commissioner Holt said that would be to be able convert back and forth. The drawings were to be a restaurant then you could move beds in case of a Hurricane. They didn't have enough money to retrofit the building. On the \$4.9 million, it was sold to congress for it to be a new building. Mr. Dixon said as a point of privilege, they have the state departments online and he asked the chairman if he would like for them to chime in.

Cory gave an update on the pre-disaster mitigation project for the Stevens High School site. DEM submitted an application and worked with the County through FEMA for a project for the saferoom. The project still needs to meet the eligibility criteria for FEMA's standard mitigation program.

*Commissioner Nesmith returned at 5:02 p.m.*

They just submitted the application to FEMA. They will probably come back with some supplemental requests for information. Typically, for projects of this nature, FEMA prefers to do retrofits of existing buildings rather than new construction. Laura Deway said they have made it pass the first hurdle to submit the application to FEMA for a safe room. They are waiting to hear back from FEMA and they will be working in a close partnership with the county to get this project where it needs to be. They are going in the right direction and they are hopeful they will get the project where it needs to be.

Commissioner Holt said on the \$200,000.00 for Emergency Operations on Pat Thomas, which

one is it for? Mr. Dixon said it is for the EOC and the Sheriff's office. Commissioner Holt had a few questions about the map. Mr. Dixon said Mr. Ford did this over the weekend. Commissioner Holt said she is asking these questions because she wants to make sure she's in line. She said they would want the buildings by the road not by the woods. She said that keeps the EMS facility from having to go through a complex in case of an emergency. Mr. Dixon said the Emergency Management facility was designed multiple ways in and out. Mr. Dixon said the City of Quincy has to build a new public works facility because ours is in sad shape. They are not having any COVID situations now, but come winter time they have a small room people have to touch each other in. Commissioner Holt likes the idea of them being next to each other because they can work better together. She asked how close is it to the community? Mr. Dixon said there are trees all along from the facility. The bypass was designed to come that way. Commissioner Holt said it would be good to talk to the community out there. They will be wondering what is going on. She said it is not a bad layout. She asked Justin if the next lot is pretty leveled? Mr. Ford said the property has a little topography and maybe do a little bit of grading. Commissioner Holt said it hopefully doesn't drain to the East. Mr. Ford said no, it drains south. The big green area is a conservation area and they won't impact any homes. Commissioner Holt asked if the \$200,000 used for design for the Emergency Operations Center be used for any other design? Mr. Dixon said no, it says emergency operations only. Mr. Dixon said the state agencies have been very generous. Commissioner Holt said for the hospital, it looks awful, and they are only looking at a section because the \$460,000.00 is not going to get walls and doors. Mr. Dixon said it is just the hardening. Commissioner Holt asked when will they will get a project manager? Mr. Dixon said as soon as they can. They just passed the procurement policy. Commissioner Holt said if they pay people, they will get people. They will need to advertise for the positions. She said for the book on the Stevens school project, she paid \$600 for it. They partnered with FAMU and hopefully they can partner with them again in order to get some design ideas. They have come over and looked at the site and walked to community. She really wants them to contact them and look at some of the ideas that they have instead of them narrowing their focus too much. Mr. Dixon said they are attempting to keep their focus wide and the new procurement policy allows them to bring in multiple vendors.

Jody McCormick with DEO said he has been listening and said how the GR funding would be essential. He talked about the benefits being restricted.

*Chair Green stepped out at 5:16 p.m.*

The map would be a separation and they would have to look into the purchasing of the property. Any property that is purchased would have to go through an assessment. With purchasing a property, the \$10 million could not be used to purchase the property and house the EMS facility at the same time. So, it would potentially be a better idea to look at using some County funds to purchase the property to put facility there. It would require an amendment to the agreement that's already in place. It is not a huge deal; he can work with Mr. Dixon to put the terms and tasks in it to best fit their needs.

Commissioner Holt asked if the EMS \$10 million dollars cannot be used for anything else. She said out of 25% match may be able to use for purchase? Mr. Jody said he doesn't see how it would be an issue unless it is a 25% match towards the EOC. Commissioner Holt said they could use County funds. Mr. Dixon said there's no match for the EOC. Commissioner Holt said she was talking about the \$10 million. Mr. Dixon said there is no match for it. The match is for the Stevens school. Commissioner Holt said OK, they have to look at finding the funds for any purchase of that property. She thinks the layout is pretty good. She said the County owns a lot of

properties that are tax properties. Every year they will have a county owned property that is a tax property.

Commissioner Viegbesie said since they can't use the \$10 million for the EOC to purchase it, can they go to an MOU with the City of Quincy so that there are no purchases of that property? They are getting competent staff of employee to make sure that everything is well and the amount of money to attract a good person also has to be factored into it. He said they have a good person running the EMS. They need to make that person from interim to a permanent position.

Commissioner Hinson said with the growth in Midway, can they entertain the idea of merging the public works department with Midway? There are so many entities in Midway and are going to be bringing a lot of business in the area. He said since Midway really is the old Quincy, a lot of people moved to Midway and with the 10-90, a lot of people don't realize Gadsden County has a lot of opportunities, they just can't see it. If they partner with Midway, they can help the people there and the businesses.

Commissioner Green said it is something that can be looked into. Commissioner Nesmith asked how much land they own? Mr. Dixon said none. He confirmed the only property they own is the property that the existing jail is on and a piece behind the Armory. Commissioner Nesmith asked if they own the property the Armory is on? Mr. Dixon said no. Commissioner Nesmith asked if it is owned by the federal government? Mr. Dixon said yes. Mr. Dixon said all of that was purchased in a section and then was spread out with partnerships with state agencies. Commissioner Nesmith asked if everything else is owned by Quincy? Mr. Dixon said yes. Chair Green asked if any of the state agencies online would like to speak. There were none.

Commissioner Hinson said there was idea of bringing in this youth complex into Midway. They had about 50 acres of land across the street from the City Hall. The people there were willing to sell. The majority of growth in Gadsden County is the City of Quincy, Midway and Havana. He said the business isn't going to come unless they have the proper infrastructure. They have the land of people willing to sell. There is a great chance a bank will be in Midway. They have to have infrastructure in order to build a city.

Commissioner Viegbesie commended the administrator and staff for this forward thinking and centralization for the services.

*Commissioner Nesmith stepped out at 5:30 p.m.*

He said tomorrow is the meeting with the city with regards with trying to get them to buy into this. He suggests that they all join the Administrator tomorrow as a unified body in the presentation of this idea so that they know they are willing to go into this project with them for the good of Gadsden County.

Chair Green wanted clarity on the suggestion. He asked if he meant on being there in person? Commissioner Viegbesie said yes, he calls it visibility. Chair Green said it is a great recommendation, however, they will be attending the FACT conference. Commissioner Viegbesie said he will be there in person.

Commissioner Holt said the build out dates for the emergency management in 2022 is the nearest one coming. The other closest will be EMS and the hospital in 25 and 27 on the public

safety complex. She put ASAP on that because it has been out here forever. She wanted to make sure about the deadlines and they may have to go back and apply for funding to match. Mr. Dixon said with her particular attitude, puts them in line for more money. They want to be the county that closes and finishes. Commissioner Holt said she is pushing for a veteran's center.

**Motion to Adjourn**

**WITH NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR GREEN  
ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 5:35 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**RONTERIOUS GREEN, Chair**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**