

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER
HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON AUGUST 2, 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
 Jeffrey Moore, District 2
 Eric Hinson, District 1
 Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4
 Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
 Clayton Knowles, County Attorney

Crystal Jimenez, Deputy Clerk
 Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

1. Invocation / Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Green welcomed everyone to the workshop. He asked everyone to bow their heads and have their own invocation. He then led to the pledge of allegiance of the U.S. Flag.

Chair Green read out loud the Citizens Requesting to be Heard statement.

2. Introduction, County Administrator

3. Citizens Requesting to Speak

Wilbert Butler, Jr. thanked the board for having him. He said the Havana CDC Community Development corporation is coming before them for a fund request of \$600,00.00. It is to address the rural healthcare services that they are proposing storage and county wide distribution for COVID related materials and supplies. Also, for cultural educational programs in which they are putting civil rights museum and have collected oral histories. The fitness and recreational program are for all age groups. They are proposing a farm to table to train people to grow and cook healthy foods. It will house two commercial kitchens. It will also have the STEM gym program which has been in place for a while.

Commissioner Holt entered at 4:07 p.m.

They conduct most afterschool programs in Leon County and Gadsden County. They have worked with East and West Gadsden. When East Gadsden has gone from F to a C, the STEM Gym was present. They have already had the plans drawn up and delivered. They have permission to move forward. They are asking for this money to help finish it up.

Chair Green thanked him for all of the work he is doing in the Havana community development.

Mr. Butler has a summary of things they have already accomplished. He said there was an announcement by WCTV in reference to \$1.2 million dollars that had been acquired to purchase the

Havana North Side site to convert it to a teen center and wants clarification on it. They have had a few people that have made financial contributions. People have volunteered to help them, like Mr. Miller who keeps their yard clean. They think that their contributors are being disenfranchised. They think that they have received the money from them and then going to sell the building. He wants to assure them and make them feel comfortable about what they are about doing because they have not been contacted about it at all.

Chair Green asked the administrator if he has had a discussion with anyone relating to the site. Mr. Dixon said not yet. Mr. Butler said the money was received to purchase the building and to create a teen center. Chair Green said this Board has never discussed any location. They did get information on some funding that will be made available. Mr. Butler said they have received phone calls from everywhere. Commissioner Holt said the congressman's office is where he needs to contact for clarification, that's who she spoke with. Mr. Butler said, without being confrontational, Commissioner Holt was the person speaking in that interview. Mr. Butler said it sends a bad message to their supporters and volunteers. Commissioner Holt clarified there was nothing said about purchasing the building that it was for a teen center. Mr. Butler said the article on WCTV specifically says "to buy the building and to convert it to a teen center". He said the pictures and interview was in front of their building. Mr. Butler said he will send the article and he wants a copy of the proposals.

Commissioner Hinson said the heartburn that Mr. Butler has is not about the teen center, it is about the purchasing of the building. The board did not agree on purchasing Havana North Side. He heard about it last week and thought it was a joke. Mr. Butler clarified it twice. Chair Green said in closing, they don't have the information and it didn't come from them. They do appreciate all their work they are doing. They will continue with this conversation as it relates to the \$600,000.00 they are requesting.

Chair Green welcomed Commissioner Jeffrey Moore to the Dias.

4. Summary Highlights, Assistant County Administrator

Mr. Dixon said they are here to talk about millage and it is that time again. Ms. Daniels will present some information again. They expect on Friday they will have a budget ready. They have gone through a couple of iterations for \$15 minimum wage. In this fiscal year, the Sherriff has gotten new monies in terms of a recurring \$500,000.00 grant from the state. There was the situation where they needed to add \$500,000.00 to his budget and they needed to get it out of the non-recurring box into the recurring box. Their recommendation is that they remain at 9 mills so that they can fulfill some of those obligations, especially to the workforce. They are suffering as everyone else is. They have to be careful to make sure they are not only keeping employees but how they can put themselves in position in the next year to bring along the people in compression.

Ms. Daniels welcomed Commissioner Moore. She passed out handouts and said a lot of the information has not changed. She apologized and said they are still working and massaging the numbers, maybe into next week for the complete budget. They will be receiving the remaining dates and they have August 12th as the preliminary budget distribution. The first public hearing is set for September 13th. They have to look at how many days before they have the advertisement that they can hold the public hearing within so many days. September 19th will be the second public hearing. Once millage rate is adopted and they approve those two dates, that information goes to the

property appraiser and he sends out the trim notice. He also will put the first public hearing date on the trim notice. Every property owner in Gadsden County will get one of those notices. That is the advertisement. Subsequent to that, they have to advertise in a local newspaper the second public hearing. Sometimes people get confused, but the trim notice is the advertisement. She continued and said the first page is just the calendar in the package. She asked if anyone had any questions. Commissioner Nesmith asked if only the first two public hearings are in writing. Ms. Daniels said they have those two dates because of the way the statute is written, on certain days they have to do certain things.

Commissioner Holt asked when they will get the complete budget. Ms. Daniels said August 12th or it could be before that. Ms. Daniels said she will meet with them and there will be another budget workshop. Commissioner Holt wanted to make sure they have discussion on budget before public hearing.

Mr. Dixon said he hopes to get them some unofficial copies of the budget. They don't want to put something out there that might change.

Commissioner Nesmith said there are other entities that have received money in the past. He wanted to know if they have the opportunity to come forward. Mr. Dixon said the constitutions will have every opportunity and they will be invited to come before them. Commissioner Nesmith said that is extremely important if they want to continue to receive funds from the Board.

- Funds Balance Summary

Ms. Daniels said they are still working with the audit, but these are preliminary numbers. The audited financial statements have not completely been done yet. This is the general fund, transportation fund, building inspection fund, and EMS Fund. Chair Green asked how long it will take for the complete audit. Ms. Daniels said they already started on it, they just needed one component to receive from the actuary. She said the Clerk is present and he may have some additional information. Chair Green asked Mr. Thomas about when it will be completed. Mr. Thomas said that was going to be one of his topics during the regular meeting. He asked if he should continue and Commissioner Holt said she wanted to hear it. Mr. Thomas said he is expecting in the next few weeks. He said the numbers for the actuary were not provided to the auditors by the Commission's staff. It wasn't provided until the month of July and it takes the actuary several weeks before they get that report.

Commissioner Holt exited meeting at 4:31 p.m.

Chair Green said they can wait for the more detailed information for the regular meeting. He has a valid idea now based on when it should be completed. He is hoping it will be completed before the first public hearing. Mr. Thomas said he can't promise that. He said the reason it was delayed was because their staff didn't provide information in a timely manner. They can't blame the auditors or the actuary because they only received the information that they were to give to them in the month of July. When it is presented, it should be a good audit, it's just delayed.

Commissioner Holt returned at 4:33 p.m.

Commissioner Nesmith said he knows they are waiting on information from the tax collector's office. Ms. Daniels said they have not received that information. They have to reach out to them. His budget is usually the same as the year before.

Ms. Daniels continued and said they have gone through the numbers as anticipated fund balances before. For the year ending in September 30, 2021, funds may go up or down depending on audited financial statements. Mr. Thomas said the general fund number is anticipated because of the restricted fund balance. It will probably be around \$1,000,000.00. Chair Green said for clarity and if he could reiterate it a little louder. Mr. Thomas clarified that he is suggesting that the fund balance may be a little bit lower, about \$4.4 million in terms of unrestricted fund balance. Unrestricted is what is presented to them to be spent.

Commissioner Nesmith asked the clerk what was the million-dollar difference. The Clerk said it takes into account money that was appropriated in fund balance for the current year. There was a transfer in that wasn't fully made. It appears there was money being transferred and there wasn't. So, they have to take that into account for the financial statements. It is the same thing as if they had appropriated a million dollars, so they take that in account in the general fund.

Ms. Daniels noted the note at the bottom of the page that says this is total fund balance and some portions may be considered non-spendable, restricted or assigned.

- Ad Valorem Tax Revenue Summary

Ms. Daniels said in the third column, \$1.788 billion was preliminary taxable values that was provided by the property appraiser on June 1st. On July 1st, he certifies a taxable value to them and that number went up a little bit to \$1.789 billion. That includes residential, commercial and new construction. That is the certified taxable value provided. Mr. Dixon said even though the evaluation has gone up, because of certain laws regarding home ownerships, most of the taxable value is not on homeowners. The only way to grow the base of Gadsden County is new construction. Otherwise, if your property goes up \$1 million today, it will go up 3% in terms of your taxes. So, growth is important to the life blood of the county.

Ms. Daniels said the first green line is the certified taxable value. The 4th column is the millage rate. There is no increase in millage rate. They would generate about \$16 million from the \$1.789 billion in property evaluations. They can only budget for 95% of that so it would be \$15 million, which is about \$1.2 million more than they had last year. The subsequent lines are the same taxable value but she gave some idea of how much would be generated if the millage rate was increased to 9.25, 9.5 and 10.

Commissioner Nesmith said they have additional commercial property that would bring in additional revenue. Ms. Daniels said it is included in the \$1.789 billion. Commissioner Nesmith asked, in addition, there is additional property? Ms. Daniels said no that's the difference between the number he gave on June 1st and the number

that he certifies on July 1st. He has some requirements that he has to do for Department of Revenue. Mr. Dixon said it rarely goes up. He said that is \$1.2 million in growth. The Sheriff's requirements are \$500,000.00 of that. Chair Green asked in the \$500,000.00, that is continuous that will be able to subdue for the request he asked for. Mr. Dixon said that is the \$500,000.00 that was on their plate when they got there. Last year they pushed it off with non-recurring money. If you throw in the \$15 minimum wage, \$600,000.00 would be the remainder. Commissioner Nesmith asked about the \$500,000.00 allocation. Mr. Dixon said that is on top of it. Commissioner Nesmith asked if it is recurring and for how long? Mr. Dixon said yes, as long as the state says so. Ms. Daniels said the \$500,000.00 they are putting in now is retro. Last year, they took the officers beginning salary for a deputy went from \$30,000.00 to \$39,000.00, now, they are saying they gave them some non-recurring money for that, this is the recurring money. Now the starting salary for a deputy in Gadsden County would be \$45,000.00.

Mr. Dixon said they leveled the playing field all over the state, so really, nothing has changed. The bigger counties will have that monetary competitive edge. Chair Green said they can't leave out the dispatchers. Mr. Dixon said none of that money goes to dispatchers. Chair Green said he had a major complaint when he met with some of the dispatchers.

Commissioner Hinson asked if the money is going to be restricted? How would they know? The Sherriff controls his budget, the Clerk of court can spend it on what they want. How do they know that the funding is being used? People are saying they are not receiving money. They need something in writing for salary increase. Ms. Daniels said they had to submit a spending plan to the state. That is contingent upon receiving the funds and there are reporting requirements. Commissioner Hinson said they need something in writing so they can speak to the citizens about the information they received so they can be on the same page. He wants to make sure that they get what they are supposed to get.

Mr. Dixon said Commissioner Hinson and Ms. Daniels are correct. The money they gave, they don't know how it was spent. It was given in hind sight. After this year's legislature the Sherriff's offices around the county got more authority to not give any information. He said do they have to give an increase without information? No, that's the leverage that they have. Ms. Daniels said they have to show payroll reports. Chair Green asked who is it given to and Ms. Daniels said the governor's office. In order to be reimbursed, they have to show documentation. The county is listed as the grant manager for that funding. Commissioner Hinson said he doesn't really speak to police officers but he is their biggest supporter. He said he doesn't mind supporting them as long as he has proof that the money is going directly to the officers' wallets.

- ARPA Update

Ms. Daniels said they received \$4.4 million from the federal government. They have spent, through different programs, they have remaining \$1.7 million. There are always requirements when you receive government funds.

Commissioner Hinson said he wasn't a part of the funding for the food cart with Piggly Wiggly. Ms. Daniels said they reached out to all of the local grocers in Gadsden County. Only Piggly Wiggly and Quality Meats agreed to participate in the program. Commissioner Hinson said he spoke to an elderly lady and she said that the younger people get all the food stamps and other help. The problem with the elderly is that they only get \$19 a month for food stamps. He thinks they should come together to see how they will distribute money. Some counties itemize different districts. Chair Green said as they move in the future, they will key in a workshop to be able to dig deeper with details in how they will assimilate the funds. Commissioner Hinson said he doesn't like rushing. They need to have budget meetings once or twice a week since they are behind.

- CARES Residual

Ms. Daniels said the remaining balance is \$2.9 million. The majority has been allocated for the hotspot distribution program. Other programs funding was allocated to. These are grant funds from the federal government so they met all the requirements.

- Departmental FY21 vs FY22

Ms. Daniels said they met with the commissioners already and had several commissioners indicate what their priorities were, and they were similar. They have to incorporate the \$15 minimum wage into it. The main thing she wanted them to look at was that last year they spent \$23.8 million, with this budget, they are anticipating \$25 million and that is about \$1.1 million more than last year. There are some programs that are specifically targeting our youth. They are currently only spending \$93,000 with BCG. There is funding included in the budget for elementary tutoring.

Commissioner Nesmith asked if they can reschedule their meetings. Mr. Dixon said yes. Chair Green said he is hoping everyone meets with the administrator to talk about priorities. Mr. Dixon said he will be meeting with Commissioner Moore as well.

Commissioner Holt asked what increases or decreases are for. Ms. Daniels said some are one-time things. Commissioner Holt said the fuel system is almost \$400,000.00 down from what it was. Ms. Daniels said they are considering building a new public works facility. They looked at things that didn't make sense. Commissioner Holt said that's why she said the narrative is there. Chair Green said he is asking constitutions to come as well. They have a lot to get done in the timeframe. Chair Green said after meeting with everyone, they can have a workshop.

Commissioner Moore thanked Ms. Daniels for a great budget presentation.

5. Board of County Commissioners Priorities and Direction

6. Adjourn

WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR GREEN ADJOURNED THE WORKSHOP AT 5:22 P.M.

RONTERIOUS GREEN, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk