

AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2022, THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Ronterious "Ron" Green, Chair, District 5 - Zoom
Kimblin NeSmith, Vice-Chair, District 3
Eric Hinson, District 1
Jeff Moore, District 2
Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4
Georgette Daniels, Assistant County Administrator
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk
Crystal Jimenez, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Nesmith started the meeting at 6:00 p.m. The invocation was led by Mrs. Howard and then followed by the Pledge of Allegiance of the U.S. Flag.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Nesmith asked Ms. Daniels if there were any amendments to the agenda. Ms. Daniels said no.

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

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 September 13, 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 Moore read the above statement.

Tony Lambardo – 312 1st St NW Quincy, FL - Havana Main Street

Tony Lambardo is the President of Havana Main Street. He stated Main Street's mission and said they are requesting \$10,000 to support the marketing program. They have been awarded \$800,000.00 worth of grant and foundation money.

Commissioner Hinson said he is very impressed and fully supports their program.

Commissioner Moore said he has attended the Woodfest and there were a lot of people and merchants making money. There are 3 main streets in the county, which is Quincy, Havana and Chattahoochee. They all bring economic impact to the merchants.

Commissioner Holt said there should be an application process so that it is fair to everyone. She said they should set money aside that they are going to award. The reporting criteria should be set aside before they award money to any organization.

Commissioner Nesmith said they need to come up with a process to strengthen their organization. He talked about having a workshop to put a process in place.

Chair Green asked Ms. Daniels if they have money set aside for non-profits and organizations. Ms. Daniels said they do have money set aside in this upcoming budget fiscal year 2022-2023, which is \$50,000.00. Chair Green thanked her and wanted it to be known because several people are requesting funding from the County. He said he is a supporter of Main Street and thanked Mr. Lambardo.

Amy McBride

Ms. McBride said she is not here to ask for money, she is trying to keep the money in her pocket. She asked about the proposed increase in the millage rate for next year. She is opposing the increase because there is so much money for taxes which are getting higher. She asked what the increase in property tax will be used for?

Ms. Daniels said the millage rate being proposed by the Board of County Commissioners is the same millage rate as last year. Ms. McBride said her TRIM notice says it is supposed to be approved for 10 millage rate. Ms. Daniels said she may be looking at someone else's. The millage rate is 9 mills, the same as last year. Ms. McBride asked if they should ignore the trim notice because it is not correct? Chair Vice Nesmith said there are various governmental entities. She asked if there is a proposal to increase it for next year. Vice Chair Nesmith said no.

Commissioner Holt said for her to contact the property appraiser's office for more information on the TRIM notice. Ms. McBride said she went to the tax collectors and they did refer her to Mr. Cunningham.

Commissioner Moore said the overall rate is composed of different components. He said the Board of County Commissioners voted to keep the rate the same and if there is an overall increase, it could be from adjustments from the school board or another entity, but they did not increase. Ms. Daniels said there may be an increase in value of the property.

Commissioner Holt said he said that, and they were the only county left that did not raise the value. The state is saying that it has to be adjusted but the Board does not get to vote on that.

Commissioner Hinson said he wants them to get that information. He wants the information that Commissioner Holt said in writing.

Ms. McBride asked if the County can talk to the state to have the local people make a proposal to them first. Vice Chair Nesmith said that is something they will need to research.

Chair Green said they are not raising the millage rate. He suggested that she contacts the property appraiser's office as Commissioner Holt stated.

1. Public Hearing: First Public Hearing for Adoption of Tentative Millage Rate and Tentative Budget for FY 2022/2023

(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator/Georgette Daniels, Assistant County Administrator)
Ms. Daniels said the tentative budget has been formulated based on maintain the current County wide property tax rate of 9.0000 mills. The calculated roll back rate is 8.3341 mills. Which is in turn .665 mills lower than the current millage rate of 9 mills. The fiscal year 2022-2023 tentative budget is \$56,954,316.00, therefore staff recommending 3 motions tonight.

The first one is a motion for the adoption of the proposed millage rate of 9 mills for fiscal year 2022/2023. The second motion is for the adoption of the tentative budget for fiscal year 2022-2023 at \$56, 954, 316.00. Finally, the staff is recommending a motion to advertise the second public hearing to be held Monday, September 19th at 6 pm at the Board of County Commissioners Chambers.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HINSON AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER MOORE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE ADOPTION OF THE MILLAGE RATE OF 9 MILLS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023.

Commissioner Holt asked if there was anything new in the budget? Ms. Daniels said there a few changes. The tax collectors budget went up about \$30,000.00 and there was an error that was corrected in custodial services and fire control.

Commissioner Hinson wants to know how much money is set aside for the commissioner aids. Ms. Daniels said they have \$78,000.00 set aside, not inclusive of the benefits. Commissioner Hinson asked if that was for the aids? Commissioner Hinson said he thought they had like \$150,000.00 for all aids. He said it's hard to find a person for that amount to serve them. He said this is the first time they ever had money set aside. He thinks they need to be bold and find some people. He thinks a fair number would be \$50,000.00 per commissioner.

Commissioner Holt doesn't think they need an increase in that area. She said they are elected to go to events and meetings. She didn't agree to the aid, but if she does, they need to be part time first. They need to be giving a little bit more to the legal aspect. Ms. Daniels confirmed that it is for 5 part time commissioner aids at \$15 an hour.

Chair Green asked how many hours would be considered part time. Ms. Daniels confirmed 20 hours a week.

Commissioner Hinson said he is not in Commissioner Holt's situation. He needs someone to help him relay information to the people. He said it's called effective and efficient. He believes that no one is more active than him in the community. He has big ideas to help people. As they give other people the authority to do what they can do, but they can't do what they are supposed to do. Commissioners should have a full-time aid. Commissioner Hinson made a motion to support a full-time aid at least for 1 year at \$40,000.

Chair Green asked if they have looked at the true numbers. He said he would also like to have an aid at some point, but he wants to make sure that it does make sense.

Commissioner Hinson said this is the first time in history they can do something. He said they just gave the administrator the authority to spend \$35,000.00 at his pleasure. He said they have \$1.2 million in the CARES Act that is not a part of the general fund. There is \$2.8 million in the American Rescue Plan that is not a part of the general fund. He said if the County Administrator wants to hire 4 aids for him, he could do so. He said he also needs help himself to do more.

Commissioner Holt said if he wants to help the people, then put the money on the houses. Commissioner Hinson said that will be his second motion. Commissioner Holt said she is still speaking. She agrees to have part time aids for this year. Commissioner Holt asked Ms. Daniels if they have \$1.2 million left in CARES Act that is not spoken for? Ms. Daniels said no. Commissioner Holt said OKAY, she didn't have to explain. Commissioner Hinson said he wanted her to explain it. Commissioner Holt said no, she is still speaking. She asked if they have \$4.5 million in American Rescue that is not spoken for? Ms. Daniels said no. Commissioner Holt said if money is spoken for, they can't use those numbers. She agreed with Chair Green that if they vote to move money and they don't know where it comes from, then it doesn't make any sense. She said it makes more sense to request that it is brought back.

Ms. Daniels reminded them that this is the 1st public hearing to adopt the tentative budget. She said they have to adopt it and if they want to look at something else than what has already been proposed, they can for the next meeting.

Commissioner Hinson said last time she presented it was \$1.2 million in the Cares Act. Ms. Daniels said it was \$2.9 million and \$1.7 million in the American Rescue Plan. The funds have already been allocated. He said they need to put the money back into the people's pockets.

Commissioner Hinson said they fattened the budget by millions of dollars. He guarantees they can find million dollars added to the budget.

Commissioner Holt said if the money is not assigned, it will be there. They can always meet after they set the budget and they determine where they want the money put.

Commissioner Moore asked how did they get from the tentative budget to the final? He wants to proceed with caution before they can't make any changes. Ms. Daniels said they are required to have 2 public hearings to adopt a balanced budget. At any time, the board has the right to amend the budget. It is not final until November 2023. Commissioner Moore asked if even the final budget is flexible? Ms. Daniels said yes.

Commissioner Hinson asked how much they have in general fund? Ms. Daniels asked the fund balance? Commissioner Hinson said yes. Ms. Daniels said they currently have \$3.9 million unassigned restrictive fund balance. She said there is \$2.3 million that is restricted. Ms. Daniels said they had a meeting with auditors this morning and they are just above what is recommended that they keep at all times.

Commissioner Hinson said they haven't got the audit report yet. Commissioner Hinson made a motion for one year to pay for a fulltime aid at a minimum of \$40,000.00, an extra 4-5 thousand dollars for insurance, but less than \$50,000.

Commissioner Holt said that's a different motion to have a minimum of \$40,000.00 because it could be \$60,000.00 if he says a minimum in his motion. She said to look at excessive money. She doesn't think it is time to take a motion on this right now.

Commissioner Hinson said she is right; he wants to do it at \$40,000.00. He said the CARES money can go into general fund and \$2.9 million can go into general fund. Everyone voted 1-4. There was no second to the motion, therefore the vote died.

Commissioner Moore asked if they had aids last year? He said he is open for discussion.

Commissioner Hinson said they set aside funds for emergency housing corporations. He wanted to make a move that they set aside \$25,000 per district for emergency housing for seniors and disabled people that qualify.

THERE WAS A MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HINSON AND A SECOND BY COMMISSIONER MOORE.

Commissioner Holt had a question, as long as there are criteria set in place because she doesn't want there to be personal preference.

Commissioner Green said they have to have workshops on qualifications on all of this funding. They are neglecting the purpose for tonight's meeting. The money is there but they can't do that. Those things should have been on the agenda. He wants them to get back on task.

Mr. Dixon said if they want a program that Commissioner Hinson wants, \$25,000 isn't going to shape nothing with housing. He said to allow them to do what they need to do. The next meeting, they will add it if they move to approve. He wants to give them that flexibility.

Commissioner Nesmith said they need to approve a tentative budget. They will have the opportunity to come back.

Commissioner Hinson said since he has been on the board, they have stayed up until 10 pm because somethings need to be adjusted. He said they are not slowing down the process, they are giving directions based on what they want. He said they have to take their time to get the budget right because it is important.

Chair Green said he doesn't know what those qualifications are. He doesn't want that responsibility as a commissioner to see if they qualify. He wants to look at the things that are there and give it to the board supporting it. Chair Green wants it to be more but will stick to the question that was given. Commissioner Holt said it is \$25,000 per district so total would be \$125,000.

Commissioner Moore asked if that will come from unspent CARES fund? Chair Nesmith said they have not decided yet. They haven't vetted the process yet.

Commissioner Hinson said yes, they know.

Ms. Daniels said they need direction for the staff. They need time to make changes.

Vice Chair Nesmith called out who will vote yes or no. They were all confused and suggested a roll call.

Chair Green said he is confused. If they make this change now, this will cause them not to be able to approve the tentative budget. Ms. Daniels said they have the revenues and the expenditures balanced, so if they are considering an additional \$125,000.00, then they need to be able to look at where that funding is going to come from. Chair Green asked is it something they can adjust and make happen? Vice Chair Nesmith said the assistant county administrator has been clear that they can adjust the budget at any time.

Vice Chair Nesmith asked if it is any different than the program already in place with SHIP? Mr. Dixon said Commissioner Hinson is advocating who decides where the money goes. Commissioner Hinson said SHIP has their own set of money, but some people need help now. He said SHIP funding is grant funding by the federal government.

Commissioner Moore wanted to clarify if they make this change, will they be able to approve budget tonight? Mr. Dixon said yes, it would just be easier for staff if they approve the budget that's proposed, then allow them to bring them back the changes.

Commissioner Hinson said he will resend his motion to help the senior citizens out in October.

Roll call for the votes was done:

Hinson	Y
Moore	N
Holt	N
Nesmith	N
Green	N

THE BOARD VOTED 1-4 BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

Commissioner Hinson wanted to add in Havana Main Street for \$10,000, Quincy and Chattahoochee Main Street. He said they purchased for an EMS in Havana, so he wants them to look into money for the property next to it for more room space. They had to build a holding pond. He will talk to the county administrator.

Commissioner Hinson asked how much money they have set aside for summer youth employment. Ms. Daniels said \$200,000.00. He asked how much is going towards students? Ms. Daniels said all of it except for fees for the OPS workers to work with the program.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE 2022-2023 COUNTYWIDE BUDGET.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE TO ADVERTISE ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2022, THE TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE AND BUDGET FOR 2022-2023 AND THE DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF THE FINAL PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT THE FINAL MILLAGE RATE AND BUDGET FOR FY 2022-2023.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
September 13, 2022, Budget Workshop

MOTION TO ADJOURN

**UPON NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, VICE CHAIR NESMITH ADJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 7:43 P.M.**

**RONTERIOUS GREEN, Chair
Board of County Commissioners**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk