

**AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FL, ON SEPTEMBER 20,  
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**  
                  **Eric Hinson, District 1**  
                  **Jeff Moore, District 2**  
                  **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                  **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                  **Opal McKinney-Williams, Assistant County Attorney**  
                  **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney - Zoom**  
                  **Crystal Jimenez, Deputy Clerk**

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

Vice Chair Nesmith started the workshop at 4:06 pm. Commissioner Holt continued with the invocation and then Vice Chair Nesmith led to the Pledge of Allegiance.

**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 11:00 a.m. September 20, 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.

**General Business**

1.       Introduction (*Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator*)  
          Mr. Dixon said they lost a good friend today. Thomas Taylor passed away with the Public Works department.  
          Mr. Dixon said Mr. Jackson has been with them to talk about Economic Development. He was given a task to show them that they can follow as a board.  
          Economic Development Job Description (*Dr. Alvin B. Jackson, Jr.*)
2.       Dr. Jackson thanked the board for partnering with him on Economic Development. He said it is close to him because it improves the quality of living for individuals. He said Economic Development should be a strategic priority. It should be the driver of creating high quality of life. Economic Development’s goal drives 3 things, creates jobs, creates sustainable jobs, and thirdly, there should be an expansion of their tax roll.  
          He had some recommendations for the job description. He read out loud the recommendations he believes they should add to the job description. An experienced developer would focus on infrastructure.

*Commissioner Hinson walked in at 4:17 pm.*

Dr. Jackson continued to explain the suggested language to add to the job description. He said agriculture and farming is not what it used to be. Agriculture is the biggest industry.

Vice Chair confirmed that Commissioner Green could hear the speaker. Commissioner Green said yes.

Commissioner Hinson asked about the 10 years' experience description. He asked if 5 years is not enough? Dr. Jackson said it would be ok, but someone with 10 years have worked from the bottom. He thinks it is important for someone to truly understand economic development. Commissioner Hinson said the word OR says a lot. Commissioner Hinson said it is more about relationships than degrees.

Vice Chair Nesmith said they are just hearing the presentation but not vote on it.

**Economic Development Plan** (*Dr. Alvin B. Jackson, Jr.*)

3. Dr. Jackson continued with the strategic plan. He stated the purpose and the mission of the economic development plan. He said the Gadsden County Quick Facts becomes a measuring tool.

Mr. Dixon clarified the issues stated. Dr. Jackson said it should make you question what is going on.

Commissioner Nesmith asked Mr. Dixon if Gadsden County has ever had an Economic Development department. Commissioner Holt said they did have an economic developer at one point. However, the board didn't have complete support behind the person.

Commissioner Nesmith asked Mr. Dixon if there are any records. Mr. Dixon said he will check.

Dr. Jackson said the challenge with the economic development role is that it is long term. Depending on assets, the individual needs to do assessments on what they have and don't have. He said it is important for them to understand the economic developer process.

Dr. Jackson continued with the information on the Industry Snapshot page in his presentation. He said they should improve manufacturing and whole sale trade for growth. He stated the purpose of Local Economic Development (LED) is to build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all.

*Chair Green walked in at 4:46 pm.*

He said every business has a supplier. They are buying gadgets from somebody and the economic development person is working in the middle. They represent the private sector. He continued to the 5 overall objectives. He encouraged them to be careful on how they dialogue from the dieses. When they establish a brand, they are looking at their meetings. If they are good policy makers, and not bashing each other, they are taking care of business. That's what they are looking for.

Dr. Jackson went over the goals.

Commissioner Holt said they been preaching the same thing since 2002.

Mr. Dixon said it happens to the small businesses they don't hear about. Dr. Jackson said over time an economic development professional understands what to look out for.

Dr. Jackson went over the incentive program.

*Commissioner Nesmith walked out at 5:44 pm.*

*Commissioner Nesmith returned at 5:47 pm.*

Commissioner Hinson said they have other infrastructure that affect the county. He wants to make sure they put a lot of thought into it. He said we are a depressed county right now. Dr. Jackson said that's why you spread the payment out over 7 years because you are taking the money and re-investing it back into your infrastructure. Commissioner Moore said these are new dollars. They are not in a sense hurting overall budget. Dr. Jackson said it is only on the increase. If you create investment, they get money back. Commissioner Holt said they have used a point system before. Commissioner Hinson said Dr. Jackson is 100% right. He is looking at it from a different level. They should make bold decisions. When they build the infrastructure, people will come. Dr. Jackson said the incentive program is an investment. They will be using new dollars and then turn around and invest it. It gives them the opportunity to negotiate with the company to run infrastructure. Incentive programs have always been political. Chair Green asked how do they find their qualified economic development director? Is there a pool? They can put out an ad and advertise it, but who would look where they advertise? Dr. Jackson said they will do their general advertising. They would advertise to the Florida Economic Development Association, International Economic Development Association, and in National Association of Counties. They need to understand county budget. It not going to be easy because people don't give those positions up easily. Chair Green asked if it is a good practice to go after businesses? Dr. Jackson said you want to make sure you have your infrastructure as much in place. You want to make sure you have assets. You have to market your strength and your policies. They will need to find their niche. Chair Green said he was glad he highlighted the small, local businesses. He would love to see the board to highlight the small businesses. Commissioner Nesmith said he created objectives and goals. It was confirmed that they are in there. Commissioner Nesmith asked if the perfect economic director landed Monday, what would they need to get started on? Dr. Jackson said that person would need an office. The office can't be in a government center. They would need an assistant that is technology savvy. They would need cell phones and data subscriptions. They need to build an economic development website. Data would be housed in that website. When this person starts, they need to provide that person with goals and objectives. Dr. Jackson said to be careful about timeframes. They can't measure month by month. They want to see a mile marker in a year. County Administrator would know if they are making progress. No one knows how many businesses in Gadsden County. Commissioner Nesmith said they need to know, as part of the goals, how many businesses in Gadsden County, but don't want it to be in 10 years. Commissioner Nesmith wants to make sure that person has a guide. Dr. Jackson said the pamphlet provided is their roadblock. Chair Green asked Mr. Dixon, in the new website, will they be able to produce some corners Dr. Jackson pointed out. Mr. Dixon and Ms. Steele said yes. Commissioner Holt said she would like for him to be on the evaluation team. Intervals of having him evaluate their progress would keep them in line. They have some kinks to work out

and infrastructure has to be there. She said incentive programs work. They need to work on the website. There should be a link to see what the community wants to see. They can see what the interest is and where its coming from.

*Chair Green walked out at 6:28 pm.*

Commissioner Hinson said 8 years ago he was the chairman and they thought about economic development. The board agreed to start at \$100,000.00. The following year they came back with \$240,000.00, the next year they were up over a million dollars. As a commissioner, they start learning things. If you don't build it, they won't come. You can get the best economic team, but without proper infrastructure, they won't show up.

*Chair Green walked back in at 6:31 pm.*

*Commissioner Holt walked out at 6:31 pm.*

Commissioner Hinson said they have to change ordinance around. He can't talk enough about infrastructure. He said to look at bond money. Tallahassee has a full-time economic person. They have millions of dollars.

*Commissioner Holt returned at 6:36 pm.*

Vice Chair Nesmith wanted to be clear, the plan provided, is ready to be presented. Dr. Jackson said this is from 30 years and no one gave him a plan. Dr. Jackson said they need to adopt the economic development plan and their mission. Then, advertise for the position. Economic Development has to be one of their strategic priorities. They also need to have a vehicle without a county logo.

Mr. Dixon wanted to ask Dr. Jackson to stay with them as they run down next year. He said sustainability becomes the biggest factor. How to sustain it for multiple years? They submarine the policy by not funding it. Vice Chair Nesmith asked Commissioner Holt for the person's title. Commissioner Holt said they were contracting an economic development council. Vice Chair Nesmith asked if it needs to be in ordinance as opposed to just policy? Commissioner Holt said they could discuss or make it a resolution. This is not something that is detrimental to the county.

Dr. Jackson said Suwanee County was in Gadsden County's position. They created the job, hired someone and there was nothing in policy. He told them they needed to create a policy. They had no idea what to fund them. The first year, it was about \$500,000.00 to start and much of it was the marketing piece and gathering data. Infrastructure is their assets. The person has to do an inventory of all the assets.

Vice Chair Nesmith asked Mr. Dixon what is their timeframe to bring this up to policy. Mr. Dixon said the first meeting in October if they meet the deadline. Dr. Jackson said if it is adopted, the PIO needs to blast it out that Gadsden County means business about Economic Development if they have made the policy. Dr. Jackson said he is looking forward to seeing Gadsden County as one of the best places to do business. It is a process and they have the right Board. That position will pay for itself.

4. The Association; Where Do They Fit In? (*Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator*)
  - a. Gadsden County Development Council
  - b. Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce

5. Marketing/Economic Development Team (*Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator*)

**Motion to Adjourn**

**WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, VICE CHAIR  
NESMITH ADJOURNED THE WORKSHOP AT 6:51 P.M.**

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

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**