

**AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR
GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON OCTOBER 26, 2022 AT
4:30 P.M, THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD,
VIZ:**

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

Call to Order, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Green started workshop at 4:33 pm. He acknowledged former Commissioner Sherrie Taylor for being present. Ms. Blackshear did the invocation, followed by 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 until 11:00 a.m. October 26, 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.
Chair Green read the above statement.

General Business

1. Introduction

Mr. Dixon said they have been working with Gadsden Senior Services to see what their issues were. Triple A, the Area Aging, pulled their funding and it was redistributed to two agencies, Gadsden Wellness and Eldercare. In meeting with Gadsden Senior Services, he was directed to look at solutions to bring services back into Gadsden County that brought stability into the program. Gadsden Senior Services is the lead agency for elderly services in Gadsden County. They have been talking about a model to meet those goals. Gadsden Senior Services is leaving the business. A foundation board would be created as a single purpose. Mr. Dixon read the GCS Foundation. There was a half million dollars left on the table this year alone. There a multiple millions of dollars every year. Gadsden County is not reaching up to pull it down. Everyone is aware of how much money Gadsden County leaves on the table. Some programs have it on automatic that the money comes into their house. They are attempting to lay out a plan that will provide services all across the county. An RFP is forthcoming of the area agency office. If they are serious about this, they have to be prepared to respond to that RFP. It will be up in the next 2-3 weeks and they need to be ready for it.

Chair Green said he thought that the Gadsden Senior Services was governed by the board completely. He found out it was different. This gives them a great opportunity to move Gadsden Senior Services forward. They want to make sure they can engage and reach seniors across the county.

Commissioner Nesmith said he also thought Gadsden Senior Services was under the board. There have been issues that have come to their attention. He said the seniors are important to all of them. He is pleased with the direction they are going in.

Commissioner Hinson said he is concerned about the liabilities. If someone gets hurt, will it be the county's responsibility? He is looking at the physical impact that they will be encountering. Certain services they need to pick up but it is more liability. He said he wants to know the reason they are at this point. There may be something like needing a budget director or executive director. They could have multiple lawsuits. He is 100% for the senior citizens but he wants to make sure they don't put the county at risk.

Chair Green said it would be a non-profit that would oversee the entity and those non-profits are required to have liability insurance. He said he could be wrong, but it shouldn't affect the Board of County Commissioners. It doesn't have anything with an individual, it had to do with the system that failed for various reasons. They are trying to solidify that they know the problems and they can be sure that the problems don't continue to happen.

Attorney Knowles said he just received the document today so he's not sure how it will be set up or run. He said looking at the policy with insurance, they do have general liability insurance up to \$3 million. He doesn't think that non-profits are necessarily required to carry insurance. Most vendors are required to have some sort of insurance. Mr. Dixon said the county has always required non-profits to carry insurance. Mr. Knowles said if it is a partnership, they can be named as a party. He needs to read through it so he can't give an answer right now.

Commissioner Hinson said they have heartburns about a non-profit but yet, they are talking about giving another non-profit the opportunity, because that's the one that they trust. A non-profit is a non-profit, so they are still going to have the same thing.

Commissioner Holt said this is a great idea. They need to bring this organization under the County. In any contract, they may require one party to provide a liability insurance and they include the other party on the insurance policy, so that way, they are covered. The senior citizens will always come to the county to ask questions. It is time to bring the senior citizens within the realms of the county. The situation has some concerns. She said she has met with several people about this and this is the best plan that they have so far. There are several departments under the county and they are liable for each one of those. In this case, they would be able to require liability insurance.

Commissioner Nesmith asked Mr. Dixon when was Gadsden Senior Services created? Mr. Dixon said it rolled out of the of the Gadsden County Senior Citizens Incorporated and the whole idea is about 30 years old, so one evolved into the other. Commissioner Nesmith asked Commissioner Holt if they have ever had any legal action taken against the organization because of acts of anything that occurs at Senior Services facility? Commissioner Holt said not that she can remember.

Chair Green said this is not just a model they are coming up with. This has been assessed and other counties have adopted. There is nothing illegal about it.

Commissioner Hinson said they are a private entity. They are in partnership with the Board of County Commissioners. They are in partnership with Gadsden Senior Services now. They have staff that works part time with them. He wants to be fair about the process. He wants to find out who ever get it, fund it more so they have more resources. They need someone that can raise

funding for them. He wants to know what the budget is. Chair Green said the model shows multiple centers in the county. Commissioner Hinson doesn't understand why people try to sue the county. He said why don't they just give them the funding that they need. Chair Green said "they" who? Commissioner Hinson said Gadsden Senior Services for one, and whoever else they can see that is doing what's right. Then they need to fund areas like Havana, need to empower them.

Commissioner Holt said the non-profit organizations that they consider would have to have a background check, they would have to have their information so the public can see it, and the contract would regulate who they select. They can advertise for a non-profit, but it is up to the board to select that non-profit. They have to have this done in a proper manner. She said they need to investigate first, then make their move. The citizens will always come to the board to ask about what is going on. This Board will be responsible for those seniors. She said this is nothing to think about, they need to hurry up and do.

Mr. Dixon said that they hope to lower the age to 55 to get young seniors into the mix. They want to create one-stop shop seniors centers. He said they could come into a senior center and be evaluated for not only the utility bill, but for housing. If they take in a senior, how much extra does it cost to bring your loved one home? Everything will be available in this plan at the senior centers across the county.

- 2. Gadsden County Elder Affairs and Services Department**
 - a. Gadsden County Senior Foundation**
 - b. Organizational Chart**

3. Review and Discussion of the Economic Development Job Description.

- a. Gadsden County Economic Development Plan**

Mr. Dixon said Dr. Alvin Jackson is present online. They will look at furthering this discussion. They have the job description for the economic development director. They also have the plan again and an ordinance.

Chair Green stepped out at 5:19pm.

Chair Green returned at 5:20 pm.

Commissioner Nesmith said Dr. Jackson has been very clear with his presentations. Economic Development is key.

Holt walked out at 5:22 pm.

Commissioner Nesmith said everything is impacted by Economic Development. There are opportunities all around us.

Holt walked back in at 5:25 pm.

They need to look at the organizational chart. His recommendation is that in Economic Development, they need to be looking at the future that Gadsden County is going. He stated that they need to think about how the decisions they make today, impact when none of them are on the board and into the future. He recommends to change the first line under the general guidance and direction of the county administrator, that they have the director answer directly to the

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commission in collaboration with the County Administrator. Board of County Commissioners plays a vital role in Economic Development. He wants this person to answer directly to the Board.

Chair Green asked, legally, how does it affect the board? He asked him to give clarity on how that person will be an employee of the county, opposed to being an employee of the department? What category this individual falls under so that they are not affecting the regulations of what they can do?

Mr. Knowles said it is based off the organizational chart. There is an ordinance they can put it in.

Dr. Jackson said he understands Commissioner Nesmith's concern. The Economic Development director will need to work very closely with the county commissioners. However, they have a very aggressive Economic Development plan. It is very difficult for the board to manage the day-to-day activities of the Economic Development director. The County Administrator needs to have direct oversight ensuring that procedures are followed. The County Administrator and the Economic Development director has to have a close working relationship.

Chair Green said they weren't trying to neglect that and that they have power over the position. So, he asked if his advice is not to do that? Dr. Jackson said when you talk about sustainability, you have to be very careful. The Economic Development director will be the go-to person for the board. It has to be structured. Chair Green said he wants to be careful because it will already be a difficult position to fill and the more difficult language they put in; it could deter the best that they can get.

Commissioner Holt said they need to report to the administrator, they need checks and balances. They need to consider that they do not know that person. They may look good on paper, but they need oversight. This is small and not worth discussing right now. They need to get the person. The system is fine how it is set up, but they need to move on and go after something on the ground.

Commissioner Nesmith asked Dr. Jackson if he was reporting directly to the board in Suwanee County? Dr. Jackson said yes, he has been through it before as an administrator previously. The County Administrator will give the director the flexibility to work with the board on sensitive issues. Commissioner Nesmith said he is going to continue to make the recommendation that he made before, and he said he thought he was being very clear when he said under the general guidance and direction of the board in collaboration with the County Administrator. It is not about an individual, it's about a structure.

Chair Green said they are not confused, they understand. He said they already have the language and he doesn't see the necessity to make that change. He said they can put all of these things in places, that they want to live beyond them, but the next level of board leaders can change all of it. Commissioner Nesmith said the changes seem to be working.

Commissioner Hinson said Dr. Jackson didn't become a superstar until he got to Suwanee County. He said he agrees with Commissioner Nesmith for the director to work in collaboration with the County Administrator. They need someone that fits their personalities.

Commissioner Holt said that is the security blanket. They are assuming that the commissioners will always be rational. She said they need to get the position out there and if they want to make changes later then they can. Chair Green said that's not the purpose of the language. Any project will come before the board anyway.

Commissioner Hinson said he is in favor of it. He believes that they need to trust someone. He said the Board of County Commissioners needs to invest in infrastructure.

Commissioner Holt walked out at 5:57 pm.

Commissioner Nesmith said he didn't think it would be that complicated. The director of economic development will work in collaboration with the county administrator. He doesn't know how clearer he can say it. It gives them the opportunity to stay in constant dialogue with the economic development director who will have a plan that they draft, so that he or she will not be moving from different projects. They will have a plan they will be following.

Dr. Jackson said as they develop the contract, it needs to be stated in the contract as their evaluation, needs to be part of that collaboration. It works either way but they have organizational structure that is proven.

Commissioner Holt returned at 6:02 pm.

b. Adoption of Ordinance and Incentive Plan

4. Questions/Comments

Motion to Adjourn

**WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR GREEN
ADJOURNED THE WORKSHOP AT 6:02 P.M.**

RONTERIOUS GREEN, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk