

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR
GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON NOVEMBER 15, 2022
AT 6:00 P.M.,THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS
HAD, VIZ:

Present: Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5
Kimblin NeSmith, Chair, District 3
Eric Hinson, Vice Chair, District 1
Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2
Brenda Holt, District 4
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk
Crystal Jimenez, Deputy Clerk

Swearing in of Newly Elected District 2 Commissioner, Alonzetta Simpkins and
Re-elected District 4 Commissioner, Brenda Holt
(The Honorable Judge Kathy Garner)

Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Green welcomed everyone to the meeting at 5:53 p.m. to start the introduction of the new Commissioner, Alonzetta Simpkins. He thanked everyone for being present. He asked Ms. Simpkins to address her family. Ms. Simpkins spoke and thanked her family for being with her. He asked Commissioner Holt to speak as well.

Commissioner Holt thanked everyone for attending. She appreciates everything they do. She thanked them for bringing Ms. Simpkins to them. She also appreciates all the votes.

Chair Green officially called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Invocation was done by Reverend Alvin Bush. He then led with the Pledge of Allegiance of the U.S. Flag.

Judge Garner welcomed everyone and continued with swearing in Alonzetta Simpkins and sitting Commissioner Brenda Holt.

Amendments and Approval of Agenda

Mr. Dixon said there are no amendments and asked that they approve the agenda.

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

Reorganization of the Board

1. Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman
(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)

Mr. Dixon present the item. Commissioner Holt nominated Commissioner Green for Chair. Commissioner Hinson nominated Commissioner Nesmith. There was a misunderstanding on who voted. They agreed to do a roll call vote for the nomination of Commissioner Nesmith.

Votes for Commissioner Nesmith:

Holt	NO
Green	NO
Nesmith	YES
Simpkins	YES
Hinson	YES

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HINSON, THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY ROLL CALL TO APPROVE COMMISSIONER NESMITH AS CHAIRMAN.

Commissioner Nesmith took his seat as Chairman.

Commissioner Nesmith thanked everyone for all of their work. Mr. Dixon advised that they have the office of Vice Chairman to fill. Commissioner Nesmith opened the floor for Vice Chair nominations. Commissioner Holt nominated Commissioner Green. Commissioner Nesmith nominated Commissioner Hinson. A roll call vote was completed for the nomination of Commissioner Hinson.

Votes for Commissioner Hinson:

Holt	NO
Simpkins	YES
Hinson	YES
Green	NO
Nesmith	YES

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY ROLL CALL TO APPROVE COMMISSIONER HINSON AS VICE CHAIRMAN.

Awards, Presentations and Appearances

2. Proclamation Honoring Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.
(Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners)

President Davis appeared with the women from Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Chair Nesmith presented the Proclamation to them. Attorney Alicia Davis thanked the board for honoring them on their centennial year.

Chair Nesmith asked Dr. Gallop Franklin to come forward to speak. Dr. Franklin, the newly elected State representative for Gadsden County and half of Leon County, spoke. He stated their goal is to partner with the local municipalities that help with economic development. He said economic development happens from a regional perspective. He looks forward to working with the commissioners to move Gadsden County forward. Chair Nesmith spoke about Dr. Franklin's background.

Consent

Mr. Dixon presented the item.

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

Commissioner Hinson stated he would like to pull item #9 so that the community can know exactly what's going on there.

3. **Ratification Memo**
(Clerk of Court)
4. **BOCC Meeting/Workshop Minutes:**
 - a. October 4, 2022 – Regular Meeting
 - b. October 18, 2022 – Regular Meeting
5. **Approval of the 2023 Holiday Schedule**
(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)
6. **Approval of the 2023 BOCC Meeting Calendar**
(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)
7. **Approval of Library Annual Plan of Service 2022-2023**
(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator/Tabitha D. Washington, Library Services Director)
8. **Gadsden County EMS Award Grant**
(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)
9. **Palm Beach County Ambulance Donation**
(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator/Kris Hood, EMS Director)

Items Pulled for Discussion

Palm Beach County Ambulance Donation

Mr. Dixon discussed item #9 and said specialty vehicles are on worldwide back order. Their ambulances started experiencing wear and tear. They reached out to Palm Beach County and their agreement requires them to keep in service 7 ambulances around the clock with 2 for backups, and they got down to 7 because of mechanical failures. They offered to send 2 units for free to stabilize their force until they can get ambulances in. It's counties helping counties. Commissioner Hinson asked him to expound on what happened last week. Mr. Dixon said they received 2 new units in which they been waiting almost a year for. The Board turned the ambulances over to the EMS and Chief Hood. Those ambulances cost a quarter of a million dollars apiece before anybody drives them.

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 noon on November 15, 2022. Comments submitted after the deadline, but prior to the meeting, will be added to the official record; however, the County cannot guarantee that Commissioners and staff will have adequate time to review comments prior to the meeting.

Chair Nesmith read aloud the above statement.

No citizens to be heard.

Public Hearings

General Business

10. Approval to Allocate Funding From the Reserve for Contingency to Purchase Property Located at Gadsden County Parcel ID# 3-24-2N-4W-0000-00311-0000

(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)

Mr. Dixon presented the above item and said it was presented to the board for approval to allocate funding from the Reserve for Contingency to purchase from seller the above referenced property. He said that Representative Gallop spoke of economic development and investment. He said this is an opportunity for the County to invest in acreage. Along Highway 267 (Pat Thomas Parkway) to stimulate economic development. The city does not have water pressure in certain places and the County's involvement allows the county to partner with them to increase the water and the economic exposure. They were donated 20-25 acres by the City of Quincy for the development of the new Sheriff's office, the new Emergency Operations Center, and the new Emergency Medical Services building. They have already invested \$20,000 to look at the property. They had the surveyors go out and they have had an appraisal and is a fantastic 52 acres. They are looking for shovel ready situations and this is an opportunity. The appraisal has come in over \$100,000 more than the asking price. The purchase of this property at the amount of \$750,000. If they look into the future of this opportunity, they can see how it will turn dollars for this community quickly.

Commissioner Nesmith said they have been talking about economic development and they have been talking about this property for a number of months.

Commissioner Hinson said the fiscal impact says to be determined. He asked who did the appraisal? Mr. Dixon said they had to hire a third party, Cureton Johnson and Associates, LLC. Commissioner Hinson said they talked about it but they did not figure out the "why". He stated that someone said the price was \$750,000 and now it is up to \$865,000. What is their "why" for purchasing the property. They need to look at all areas first and then do a need assessment. They need to determine where they need to put it, in Quincy, in Midway, Havana or Hardaway. It is hard to make that investment without knowing the "why". He asked for a

workshop for the “why” and the exact amount. He said they should put the money on infrastructure instead.

Commissioner Nesmith asked Mr. Dixon if they were under contract? Mr. Dixon said they have gotten an opportunity to look at the property. Whether they accept it or not, they will negotiate the price, that’s why they don’t know the fiscal impact. They first had to get an appraisal of the property to know what value it was.

Commissioner Green said he agrees with Commissioner Hinson. He said they should consider more than one appraisal. He likes the concept of the possibilities of being out there but, after doing some research, it may not be the best place. He wanted to make sure they are seeing all the possibilities that are out in the county before they make an investment of \$750,000. He said his biggest thing was the appraisal part and wanted to know that they had more than one appraisal.

Commissioner Nesmith asked for the timeframe. Mr. Dixon said the owner did their appraisal but they needed to do their own. So, there are 2 appraisals out there. They have spent millions of dollars every year on maintenance for old buildings and they have 52 of them.

Attorney Knowles said there was a purchase option executed for \$20,000 and they got an extension as they tried to get an appraisal, tried to get a title search and survey. They can use any legally prescribed method they want to use, as long as they did not want to keep the purchase. They are within the law but they are not at the purchase point yet. This agenda item is still asking them to negotiate that. They can get another appraisal if that is the Board’s will. They do have a good seller. Commissioner Nesmith wanted to be clear that this was just a motion to authorize them to start discussion for a purchase price.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if this was the appraisal report? She said because it states it is for the sole purpose of assisting a client, Betty Register Family Trust. Mr. Dixon said this is their appraisal. She said looking at the property component itself, a large amount of the appraisal is the body shop, which was \$350,000. She would like to see a plan. Mr. Dixon said there is a body shop already on the property, another vendor and housing on the property. Those leases will continue, until the board decides otherwise, as they develop the real plan. Commissioner Simpkins said down from the property, there is state property. She asked if they have looked into it? Mr. Dixon said they have had gentle conversations. It is an opportunity. They have grand opportunities there that are coming along as they speak.

Commissioner Nesmith wanted to remind them, whatever amount they negotiate, has to come back before the board. They have the opportunity to go on a different direction and for more workshops and additional meetings.

Commissioner Holt said anything along I-10 will have a price tag on it. She said nothing is cheap. Companies are not going to come if they do not have land. Pipes have to be in the ground, if not they will get outbid. She said they have to buy property. She said that 3 comparables should have been done in this appraisal and was done. These points should have

been brought to the administrator before this meeting. This is a negotiation of the prices, not a sale. She said they need to move on and need to look at getting a Grants Coordinator.

Commissioner Nesmith confirmed they are working on grants and Commissioner Holt said a Coordinator as well.

Commissioner Green said if the County was to purchase that property, that value probably would increase more than what it is now. If they get the property and do the ground work, it would be appraised for more in 10 years.

Commissioner Hinson said he was perplexed. They need to buy land but need to do it the right way. He said the Agenda Request says, if it is approved, they are going to purchase and it was not coming back to them again. He said he was not against buying, but make it make sense. In regards to state property, if they can be good partners with the University of Florida, they may say they have a 99-year lease on land for free. They may have options to look at.

Commissioner Nesmith said they can make a motion to authorize the Administrator to start negotiation process.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION #1 WITH A SECOND FROM COMMISSIONER GREEN.

Commissioner Hinson said to make sure they recognize the motion says “approve to allocate funding”. Commissioner Holt said it says to allocate funding, not purchasing anything, they are moving money out of Contingency.

Attorney Knowles said Section 2-113 requires there be a public hearing prior to the purchase of any real estate and would need to come back to the Board. Mr. Dixon said if dealing with these negotiations, good faith is important. Your request simply says they are interested.

Commissioner Green said he was going to ask Attorney Clayton for legal advice of this item.

Commissioner Hinson said if it is approved, the language is not on there. The seller could say once it gives permission, it does not say what the attorney said. He said what is the rush? They should do a workshop and fix the language. It doesn't say that it will come back for a public hearing.

Commissioner Holt said the request says to approve to allocate funding, that is moving money from one account to another. Mr. Dixon said there is no number there because no negotiation has taken place. In any negotiation, you have a buyer and seller. It has to come back to the board, whether it is written or not.

Commissioner Simpkins asked with allocating the funds, since there is no amount there, what are they transferring? Mr. Dixon said they do not know. She asked when would it be determined? Mr. Dixon said if they can agree on a purchase price. Commissioner Simpkins

asked at what point are they allocating the funds? She asked are they only identifying some funds? Mr. Dixon said yes.

Commissioner Hinson said it is called public trust. He said if the wording is not in the motion, then it will not come back before Board.

Commissioner Green asked if there is an Ordinance that says that they have to have a public hearing automatically? Attorney Knowles said it is required to bring it back for public hearing. He asked Commissioner Holt to tweak the motion.

Chair Nesmith asked Commissioner Holt to amend her motion to include whatever purchase price is negotiated between the Administrator and the seller, it come back before the Commissioners in a public hearing.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AS STATED, TO AMEND CONTINGENT UPON COMING BACK BEFORE THE BOARD FOR APPROVAL IN A PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND MADE BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

11. **Approval of the Audit Engagement Letter**

(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)

Mr. Dixon presented the above item.

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

Commissioner Nesmith asked how long they have used the accounting firm for? Mr. Dixon said forever, it should change up. Commissioner Nesmith asked if they submitted an RFP? Mr. Dixon said no, due to everything being late. The request is for 2 years. Commissioner Holt said it's been in and out. She said when they have another firm come in, do it for 2 years. They need to look at accounts they have questions about.

Commissioner Green asked that they make sure they have the RFP earlier, in the future, so they have other options in a timely manner. Commissioner Hinson said if they can get all the contracts and see the dates.

Clerk of Court

12. Updates

(Nicholas Thomas, Clerk)

There were no updates.

County Administrator

13. Updates

(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)

Mr. Dixon congratulated Commissioner Nesmith. He thanked everyone for Veterans Day. He said next week is Thanksgiving. The week after, they also have the FACT Conference. For legislative day, any ideas could be brought forward. They have been in negotiation with

Ballard for next meeting. He said they will be partnering with Quincy, Havana, Chattahoochee, Midway and others to continue to push forward.

County Attorney

14. Updates

(Clayton Knowles, Esq., County Attorney)

Attorney Knowles congratulated Commissioner Simpkins. He said on December 6th, they will be getting another \$44,000 in opioid settlement from Walmart. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Nesmith also recognized Colonel Collins. Colonel Collins congratulated Commissioner Simpkins and Commissioner Holt.

Discussion Items by Commissioners

15. **Commissioner Eric F. Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson congratulated Commissioner Simpkins and Commissioner Holt. He asked for everyone to pray to just do what's right. He said mental health is prevalent, especially in the youth. He went to a meeting; they stated that outdoors activities can help stimulate kid's minds. He said they need to do more of that. They need to bring a community center in Havana and Sawdust.

Commissioner Green stepped out at 7:53 pm.

Commissioner Green returned at 7:54 pm.

He said they should schedule a meeting on the community center on the west and east side of town.

Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2

Commissioner Alonzetta thanked everyone for allowing her to sit with them. She dittoed the county administrator in regards to the Veteran's day event. She agreed to put infrastructure in place to move in the direction they want. She also agreed mental health is real, she said she is die hard for the youth. She wished everyone a great Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Brenda A. Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt congratulated Commissioner Simpkins, she said they need to continue being brief so people don't walk out on them. She wants them to get aggressive on economic development. She said if you don't have land, don't have anything. They need to start the negotiation.

Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5

Chair Green congratulated Simpkins, chair and vice chair. Recognized his aid, Nick Frison. He had questions for Mr. Lee. He asked about Jim Williams Road; they talked about uplifting. He wanted to see what the process was. Mr. Dixon said he will check tomorrow. He asked if he can speak to Mr. Steele. He asked the status on planning and zoning board. When is the last

time they had a meeting? Mr. Steele doesn't have an exact date; he thinks it was June. Commissioner Green asked how often do they meet? Mr. Steele said once a month. Commissioner Green said they all selected people on that board. He doesn't want to embarrass anyone but wants to make sure they are communicating. He wants them to get back in the flow of having meetings. Mr. Dixon said they discussed planning and zoning; they are looking into getting more members since they don't always have a quorum. Commissioner Nesmith asked about the policy, he asked is there a statement that say if they miss so many days, they can move in a different direction? Mr. Steele said if members are not showing up, they would notify that commissioner, after missing 2 meetings. Commissioner Green said December 2nd is the Christmas parade. The staff is preparing them to be a part of the parade. December 17th. Lake Talquin will have Christmas parade. He was asked to be the grand marshal of that parade. He asked Mr. Dixon for the foundation of senior services. It is coming in quickly, any updates? Mr. Dixon said he will know tomorrow or the next day. Commissioner Green asked about the adoption of road process. He wants it emailed to him, so that they can see the process of the adoption of roads.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN FOR A PROCLAMATION FOR DEXTER JACKSON THAT IS NOW A PART OF THE FLORIDA HALL OF FAME SINCE HE IS FROM GADSDEN COUNTY AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Commissioner Green said November 18th, at 2pm, Riverchase will be hosting an Alzheimer's walk. He would like to see more involvement with their facility. They have a new director and have a welcoming with her. They have had a turnover.

Commissioner Holt said on planning and zoning board, they need to provide training and workshops. They may require funding; they deserve stipend because they are working for free. Mr. Dixon said it may be the hardest job, it is difficult to be a planning and zoning professional.

Commissioner Kimblin E. Nesmith, J.D., District 3

Commissioner Nesmith asked the commissioners to complete the evaluations on the administrator this week. Human resource has only received one. Commissioner Holt said she completed hers. He thanked the administrator for the veteran's day program. He said it was fantastic and close to running out of food and other items. They are entering the legislative season, he asked if they have met with all the municipalities? Mr. Dixon said not yet. They have a project with City of Midway. Commissioner Nesmith thanked the administrator for broadband workshop. He asked who schedules the meeting with the legislative team? Mr. Dixon said they have to wait for them to be sworn in. This time they probably won't. They are trying to get ahead. When they organize, will invite them in. They need to be ahead of that process. Thanked Commissioner Green for mentioning Riverchase. He asked Mr. Dixon to email dates. He congratulated Nick Frison on becoming Commissioner Green's aid. He said Frison was the first president of the law academy class. He is like a son to him; he watched him grow and mature.

Greenlight moment: "A flower does not think about competing with the flower next to it, it just blooms. In other words, we are on this Dias together, and no matter what choices we make

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or disagree with, we are not competing with each other. We are working together so that we can bloom together in this County.”

Motion to Adjourn

**UPON NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH
ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 8:27 P.M.**

**KIMBLIN NESMITH, Chair
Board of County Commissioners**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk