

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON APRIL 18TH, 2023 AT 6:00 P.M.,
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

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

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman NeSmith called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. Commissioner Simpkins led into provocation and Chair NeSmith led into the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Dixon stated Item #13A Dewberry Contract for Stevens School to be amended.

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

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES

Mr. Dixon stated they had a proclamation honoring National Library Week for 2023, presented by Ms. Washington.

1. **Proclamation Honoring 2023 National Library Week**

The Board presented proclamation to the Library Director Tabettha Washington.

2. **Presentation Regarding the Gadsden Arts Center & Museum**

Mr. Dixon presented the above item.

Grace Robinson appeared before the Board and gave an update regarding the Gadsden Arts Center & Museum.

CONSENT

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND WITH A QUESTION. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Commissioner Hinson asked for the County Administrator to expand on agenda item 7 due to what was going on nowadays with all the shootings.

Mr. Dixon explained it was a letter of agreement to authorize the Tallahassee Big Bend Crime Stoppers. The primary funding comes from the state office of the Attorney General through a Trust Fund Grant and Aid Program. It was required to be renewed every 3 years. They were required to

obtain a letter from each Commissioner authorizing them to act as their agent for the purpose of applying for receiving monies from the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund.

3. **Ratification Memo**
(Clerk of Court)
4. **Approval of Minutes**
 - **March 21, 2023 BOCC Meeting**
5. **Approval to Confirm the Director of Public Works**
(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)
6. **Small County Consolidated Waste Grant Amendment with FL Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**
(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator/Curtis Young, Public Works Director)
7. **Letter of Agreement Authorizing Tallahassee Big Bend Crime Stopper, Inc**
(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)
8. **Approval of Memorandum of Understanding Between Gadsden Board of County Commissioners**
(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)

ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners welcomes and encourages public participation at all meetings of the Board. Citizens are free to speak for up to three (3) minutes on non-agenda items. Public comments and participation are also encouraged for items on the agenda. Additionally, if you are unable to attend a meeting in person, comments from the Public can also be submitted via email to CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov until noon on the date of the meeting. 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. Citizens are further encouraged to participate via Zoom using the credentials on the County's website. The Board's meetings are also broadcast live on the Board's Facebook page.

Mr. Dixon read aloud the above statement.

Elizabeth Jenkins, 111 Minnie McGriff Lane, Havana FL

Ms. Jenkins appeared before the Board to discuss re-zoning in their area. She was requesting her area to be changed back to Residential instead of Agricultural.

Commissioner Hinson stated it was Ag 3 property and one house per 20 acres. He stated he thought there was something in place where if they wanted to give a piece of property to their child, they could do that. He stated he believed it was passed about 2 or 3 years ago.

Mr. Dixon stated if they were talking about 1991, that was when they were all forced to do COMP plans. All land across the county was changed. The County had to justify its growth. They had to either show the state where they were growing, or all other properties had to go into some form of stasis. They could not call it residential if the population cannot fit the growth.

Commissioner Holt stated it was called the Family Exemption. They would have to get with the Administrator and Mr. Stiell so that way they could see if anything was changed and what needed to happen to get where they need to be.

Ralph Jenkins, 111 Minnie McGriff Lane Havana, Fl

Mr. Jenkins appeared before the Board to discuss the zoning issues in his area.

Commissioner Green stated they needed to look back at what the Ordinance was saying so they could make the necessary modifications.

Commissioner Holt stated she was still trying to get the COMP plan worked. She stated they put in 3 acres because it was easier to get a house on it. They needed to work the COMP plan and look at it.

Chairman NeSmith stated that now that they have brought that to the Commissioner's attention, the Administrator knows how to package this so that it could go through the process and see what changes they need to make.

Ms. Jenkins stated those things had restricted families from moving forward with residential growth. She stated the people of Gadsden County need training and education on this.

Denise Pouncy Hannah, Gadsden County

Ms. Hannah appeared before the Board and stated she wanted them to go look at their archives and ordinance to see how it was advertised. If they advertised that they were going to change property, then people would come. They wanted to know the date published and which paper it was in. She told the Commissioners if something was happening in their district that would impact their constituents, let them know. She also mentioned about having to walk all the way around the building and the front door being locked. She asked why it was locked.

Commissioner Hinson stated they had workshops about the COMP plan, that was why it was changed. They could add their daughter in there based on the Family Exemption.

Commissioner Holt stated it takes a while. Once they do zone changes, it has to be sent to the state.

Mr. Dixon stated the front door being locked was a security issue.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

9. Approval of Ordinance 2023-02

Chair NeSmith presented the above item. He stated this was an Ordinance of the Board of County Commissioners of Gadsden County related to the indigent burials within Gadsden County. This would add a new section to the Code of Ordinances of Gadsden County, Florida.

Mr. Dixon stated the item was related to the Indigent Burial Policy.

Chair NeSmith stated this was open to the public; he asked if anyone from the audience would like to speak on this issue.

Commissioner Holt needed clarity. She asked Attorney Knowles to give specifics on this. Attorney Knowles stated they incorporated changes that the Board requested regarding limiting who qualified for this and limiting the Board's responsibility for burying just anyone. He stated the funding would be \$5,000. It would be brought back to the Board if additional funding was needed. The next step would be to either put out an RFP or RFQ for the local funeral homes.

Commissioner Holt stated she needed clarification on what was changed from previous. She needed it to be underlined or to make it more obvious of what was changed from the last time this went before the Board.

Commissioner Green asked if the \$5,000 was for the year or what it was for. Attorney Knowles stated that was a total line item, so that would be all the money budgeted for the entire fiscal year.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HINSON AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM

GENERAL BUSINESS

10. Approval of Lease Agreements with the Tenants on the newly purchased property located at 2426 Pat Thomas Parkway

Mr. Dixon presented the above item.

Commissioner Hinson stated he noticed it showed \$175 per month. He asked if that was a house. Mr. Dixon stated yes; 2 of them are Lots. Commissioner Hinson also asked if the 2426A location was a house as well. Mr. Dixon stated that was a Lot.

Attorney Knowles stated there was not much changed, it was just more tightened up. Commissioner Hinson mentioned the liability part of it. Attorney Knowles stated there was sovereign immunity protection.

Commissioner Holt asked if they were doing repairs on those houses. Attorney Knowles stated there were no repairs, but issues with fence and barns.

CHAIR NESMITH CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

11. Approval of Non-Profit Request for Funding Application and Guidelines

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. He stated it was for review and not required to be passed tonight. They will add it to the Agenda for the next meeting.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they could have a workshop on this. He still wanted to focus on infrastructure.

Commissioner Holt stated non-profits do have the ability to apply for their own funding. They did not have to go to Government for funding.

Commissioner Hinson said this was a great year for non-profit. There is a lot of funding out there to get it.

12. Approval of the Agreement with the Gadsden County Emergency and Services and ESO Regarding Fire Incidents

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. He stated the ISO ratings were reported to the fire departments. They are looking to put in place a system where they can keep in house the fire incident reports. They do not currently have that, however, their Producer who keeps their EMS has a system that would marry theirs, and they were seeking approval to adopt that system.

Commissioner Hinson stated he knew they had an issue in Havana and all over Gadsden County. He asked if Concord was penalized. Mr. Dixon stated no. It was Concord, Quincy, and Chattahoochee. The rest were penalized.

Commissioner Hinson asked how come Concord was off the hook. Mr. Dixon stated Concord was a separate entity. Commissioner Hinson asked if both parties were funded the same. Mr. Dixon stated they fund all parties involved. Since they were their own independent fire departments, they all got their own ratings.

Commissioner Green stated he recently had a meeting with volunteer fire fighters and he was trying to work out things to present to the Board.

Commissioner Holt asked Mr. Dixon if they could maybe consider getting with the school system as well, they could possibly be interested in taking the course.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she spoke with Mr. Dixon in January, so this was top priority for her. She stated they need to workshop this. She spoke with the State Marshall and they were willing to go in and tell them what they need to do to ensure that all of their stations are below the 10. She stated this was not something they could drag on; people were about to lose their insurance, especially businesses. They need to get this done within the next couple of months. They needed to put a plan together as it relates to their fire.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they could put the fire department before the non-profit. He stated this was urgent. Chair NeSmith stated consider it done.

Commissioner Green stated the Superintendent of the Schools was already on board with the process of implementing the program. So, it would be good to bring them into the workshop as well.

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

13. Approval to Extend the Integrity Group Professional Continuing Service Contract

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. He stated they have done a lot of great work with Integrity. He hoped they would consider extending the contract.

Commissioner Simpkins stated when it came to monies being spent, the amount was close to a million dollars. A Workshop needed to be scheduled. They need to sit down and go over their organizational chart. They were spending a lot of money. She wanted to believe they have someone that could develop effective project tracking for them. She wanted to believe they had that available in their staff. She said they could've done things for their citizens with the type of money they were putting out for their consulting services.

Commissioner Hinson stated the Integrity Group's focus was how much money they could bring into Gadsden County. He wanted to know what projects they have brought into Gadsden County the past 3 years. Commissioner Hinson asked if everything was 10%. Mr. Dixon stated yes. Commissioner Hinson asked why Tallahassee was not 10% for their contract. Commissioner Hinson stated he did not mind paying people for their services, he just wanted to make sure that they focus on funding that they could not get.

Commissioner Green stated they do not have staff for that type of department. The concern was if they looked for other competitors that provide these types of services. Mr. Dixon stated they did look around but they have enjoyed the relationship with them and it has been beneficial. He stated he could RFP this in the morning if that was what they wished. He stated the charges might go down but the relationship they had with them has value in it in regards to getting things done.

Chair NeSmith asked if it was a one-year contract and it would expire on March 19th, 2024. Mr. Dixon answered yes.

Commissioner Green stated if they could negotiate their percentage ratings; maybe a discount for the recurring of the contract. Mr. Dixon stated if he directs him to do that, he could talk to them.

Commissioner Holt stated she met with several companies. It was difficult to get anyone to take these contracts. The amount of federal paperwork it takes, especially during a disaster. She stated they needed to have professionals to do this; they did not have the qualifications. Commissioner Simpkins stated she heard Commissioner Hinson state that there was supposed to be finding grants and funding. She did not see it listed anywhere. It entailed administering the grant and preparing correspondence. She stated they could pull a team together with \$800,000. Everything deals with assisting and preparing of the close out packages for the grants. Mr. Dixon stated it was a federally precured contract. The RFP called for emergency management consultant for the County. The experience required was:

- Emergency Management Planning
- Financial and Grant Administration
- Emergency Management Plans, Policies, and Procedures
- Background Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Exercises
- Experience in National Incident Command System

- Experience with the Emergency Management Agency

Mr. Dixon stated in the event that there is a disaster, they must have a team like this available otherwise they could not recover federal funds.

Commissioner Hinson stated it would be the first time since he has been on the Board that they never did an RFP on an item of this magnitude. It would send a strong message to the community if they were being consistent because they were talking about a million dollars on the line. They have never approved something without an RFP of this magnitude. Commissioner Hinson stated they need to do an RFP and then bring it back.

Chair NeSmith asked Mr. Dixon when did the current contract end with Integrity. Mr. Dixon stated the end of last month.

Commissioner Green stated they needed to do it the proper way. There are only a few selected providers in the industry, but to give them opportunities. The percentage levels may be different. He had no problem with integrity. If they stick with them, he hoped they could reconsider to have something less on the table.

Commissioner Holt stated they cannot select someone because of the price on this, they are not paying the money themselves. Whatever is done needs to be done quickly. She wanted to emphasize that if they were going to do an RFP, they need to do a short period of time. The requirements in the RFP have to meet federal standards because that is who gives the money.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned DEO Broadband tool kit project; they need a special person to overlook that since it is considered emergency. She stated she noticed that they keep mentioning have to have experience in all of it, and she asked if all the counties that received ARPA Funding had to have someone that had experience in homeland security in order to get funding. Mr. Dixon stated yes.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO SEND THIS TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO DO AN RFP FOR THIS PARTICULAR ITEM AND COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM. COMMISSIONER HOLT OPPOSED.

Commissioner Hinson stated the County Administrator should not put this Board in this position. The deadline was last month. If this came to them 3 months in advance, then they would've had time to see this through. He stated it was not the Board's fault, it was the County Administrator for bringing this in too late.

Commissioner Holt stated they put the County in jeopardy; they were not getting a penny because of no contract. If they go month to month, they still aren't getting a penny. If a hurricane or tornado hits, people are put in danger. They need to have coverage for citizens. She stated they can do the RFP if they want to, but they need coverage until they can get that done. It does not matter whose fault it is.

13A Dewberry Contract for Stevens School

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. It has been approved by DEO.

Commissioner Holt asked the County Administrator if the amount of this is 1.7 million. Mr. Dixon answered yes.

Commissioner Hinson said this was urgent, they need to do it quick.

Mr. Dixon stated Stevens School had been authorized as a COVID shelter. The due date is September 30th. They had been having problems with DEO.

Commissioner Holt stated she was not going to vote against it and thanked them for voting on this.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HINSON AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

CLERK OF COURT

14. Updates

Nothing to report.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

15. Updates

Nothing to report.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

16. Updates

Nothing to report.

17. DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2

Commissioner Simpkins wanted to announce the Town Hall meeting in Havana on May 3rd at 6PM. She asked if an organizational workshop had been put on the schedule. Mr. Dixon stated not yet, they would schedule it alter this week. Commissioner Simpkins wanted to hope it would be this month. She asked if they were able to take a look at CDBG and Public Works grant. Mr. Dixon stated he did not recall. For the bicentennial, she asked if she was supposed to give names to Mr. Dixon. Chairman NeSmith stated yes. Commissioner Simpkins asked about the playgrounds and where they were with that. Mr. Dixon stated the engineers and Public Works were going to refresh the parks. They brought in suggestions and will get feedback from the Board on how to move forward. Commissioner Simpkins stated she needed to know exactly where they are with this on the next meeting.

Commissioner Holt asked what was the deadline for the Grant. Mr. Dixon stated just closed one.

Commissioner Simpkins stated in order to move forward, they need to put timelines.

Chair NeSmith asked if Commissioner Simpkins came up with a theme. Commissioner Simpkins stated she had given the County Administrator some awesome ideas but no theme yet. Commissioner Simpkins asked if there is a schedule as it relates to grass mowing. Mr. Young appeared before the board. He stated he would give the schedule to Mr. Dixon. Commissioner Simpkins asked about bonuses. Mr. Dixon stated he knew it was done; he will bring it up in the next meeting. Commissioner Simpkins asked where they were with Granicus. Mr. Dixon stated he would send the report in the morning.

Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt asked the County Administrator if someone could produce charts of what they were talking about. She stated to improve staff to get where they need to be, they need some numbers. She stated not getting good feedback on some employment opportunities. She stated there are people that are technologically savvy that could give them some of that information. Commissioner Holt stated they used to have it where the Department heads did their presentations on agenda items. They would get a lot of more information. Also, they were having workshops where the County Administrator and Department heads practiced those agenda items beforehand. She also mentioned they need a program to keep the county clean. She mentioned the speakers from earlier and their zoning issues and stated there were thousands of people in the county that also were having issues with their property. But it would not work unless Planning and Zoning Board understand what they were looking for. She stated they need to meet with them so they could understand. She stated the Commissioners should be doing research and bringing in numbers. If not, they would just be going back and forth. Chairman NeSmith asked if she came up with a theme. Commissioner Holt stated no.

Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5

Commissioner Green asked about Integrity. To his understanding, they were also working on a project. If they did not renew the contract, did that mean they were not going to complete the project? His vote was a no for Integrity item.

Attorney Knowles mentioned section 2-52 Sub F.

Commissioner Holt stated if he changed his vote to no, they cannot bring the item back. She stated he needed to leave it as is.

Commissioner Green stated they did not know when they were going to get the RFP; anything could happen. He wanted to make sure they were protected. He asked what if something would happen. Commissioner Green stated he would keep his vote as it was before, 4-1. Commissioner Green asked if they got a date for agenda item for summer program applications and interview. He asked Mr. Dixon where they were with this. Mr. Dixon stated applications would be out the end of the month. They were working through issues, but everything was ready for the program. He stated they would put it out in the next week or so. Commissioner

Green stated he did have his 2 people to submit to the County Administrator for the Bicentennial. He also stated he had things to email regarding the Bicentennial.

Commissioner Holt asked if there was a deadline for Broadband. Mr. Dixon stated they were completing all projects they currently have.

Commissioner Eric F. Hinson, Vice Chair, District 1

Commissioner Hinson asked the County Administrator about summer youth employment. He stated that the County Administrator stated at the last meeting that it would be out by that Friday. Two weeks later, it still had not been displayed. Mr. Dixon stated he did not say that.

Commissioner Hinson stated he had asked him to put on the agenda for Havana and Midway to be one of the recipients for funding, and the County Administrator did not do it. Mr. Dixon stated he did not have a program. Chairman NeSmith clarified with the County Administrator that the other cities submitted proposals. Mr. Dixon stated yes. Commissioner Hinson stated they did not agree to have Gretna or Chattahoochee on the Agenda. It was just on the agenda. The Board agreed to place Havana and Midway on the Agenda. It was not on there. He stated the Summer Youth Employment was near and dear to his heart. Commissioner Hinson stated Mr. Dixon needed to have a sense of urgency and did not respect the Board. When Commissioners ask him to put things on the agenda, he was not doing it. Commissioner Hinson stated the Board is supposed to give the County Administrator directives.

Commissioner Hinson stated a few years back, they did a roof for a lady. Within a year or two, water was leaking out of the roof. He stated he sent an email to staff stating that they needed to look at her roof and the floors. Commissioner Hinson stated now there was mold in her ceiling. He stated he sent it to the County Administrator; he was not sure if it was Mr. Dixon or a different one. They needed to look into this to see if they could help her out. Commissioner Hinson stated a few years back, each Commissioner had \$20,000 for Emergency Housing funds. If an elderly needed assistance, they could apply and they could get the help. Commissioner Hinson stated they should do \$50,000 for emergency housing per district.

Commissioner Holt stated that may take a while to look at that. She stated that people that specialize in housing needed to look at this as well. She stated if there was going to be a vote for it, it needed to be planned.

Chair NeSmith stated he needed to understand this more and do research so that he could implement ideas that could be long term.

Chairman Kimblin Nesmith, Chair, District 3

Chair NeSmith stated he will give the 2 names to Mr. Dixon for the Bicentennial. He wanted to thank the community and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. for an awesome event they had for expecting mothers. He also wanted to congratulate Twin City Brewery for their grand opening in the city of Chattahoochee.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she wanted to give a shoutout to Mothers Care, the minority health fair.

Commissioner Simpkins provided a quote:

“We cannot solve problems with the kind of thinking employed when we came up with them.”

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
April 18th, 2023-Regular Meeting

MOTION TO ADJOURN

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED
THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:44 P.M.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FL

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk