

**AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FL ON FEBRUARY 7, 2023 AT 4:00 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, District 5**  
                          **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                          **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                          **Crystal Jimenez, Deputy Clerk**

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

Chair Nesmith welcomed everyone to the workshop at 4:02 p.m. Commissioner Green gave the invocation. Chair Nesmith proceeded with 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](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 11:00 a.m. February 7, 2023. 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.

Mr. Dixon read the above statement aloud.

**General Business**

**1. Introduction**

Mr. Dixon said they will hear the Local Mitigation Strategy Plan for 2022. He advised Ms. Sheree Keeler, Ms. Tashonda Whaley, Ms. Candace Heel and Mr. Justin Stiell were present to present their plan.

**2. Gadsden County Local Mitigation Strategy Plan 2022 Update**

Ms. Keeler from the Integrity Group presented their presentation. She wanted to give a high-level overview. She said that following the workshop, there is an agenda item on the regular board meeting seeking their approval of resolution and for it to formally be transmitted to the state. When she says the state, she means the Division of Emergency management (FDEM). The LMS plan was posted on the county's website for 10 days. They have received 0 comments. She thanked Tashonda, Candace and Justin because they are really the drivers of this plan and she is just the navigator. Mr. Anthony assisted her, he is a tech contractor, and he added a lot. He was not able to be present but he is available on zoom. It was a team that did this, not one individual. She continued with the power point included in the agenda packet.

Planning for Disaster Events Includes: Preparedness, Response, Recovery, Mitigation.

LMS Plans must be updated every five years (federal) and reviewed annually (state). It can be changed as much as they want, as long as they are in compliance.

*Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 4:22 p.m.*

*Commissioner Simpkins returned at 4:23 p.m.*

Original LMS Plan was created in 2009.  
5-year LMS Plan update was approved in 2016.  
5-year LMS plan update was in process in 2022.  
Next 5-year LMS Plan update required in 2027.

*Commissioner Holt entered at 4:29 p.m.*

**LMS Plan – Six Sections to Meet Compliance Requirements:**

- Section 1 – Introduction
- Section 2 – Planning Process
- Section 3 – Geography, Demographics, and Land Use
- Section 4 – Hazards, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
- Section 5 – Mitigation Strategies
- Section 6 – Plan Evaluation, Maintenance and Adoptions

Chair Nesmith asked if all the municipalities are responsible for their own LMS Plan? Ms. Keeler said they pass a resolution to adopt it.

Commissioner Hinson said she answered his question.

Commissioner Green asked how often do they change the LMS committee and how are they selected? He said it was also a great presentation. Ms. Whaley said during the annual meeting, if there are any changes, they send their representative. During annual meeting they can change the chair or the vice chair. Commissioner Nesmith echoed Commissioner Green.

Chair Nesmith said October 10, 2018 will go down in history due to Hurricane Michael. He asked if they had an LMS plan during that time? Ms. Whaley said yes. Chair Nesmith asked what impact it had on Gadsden County and the recovery? Ms. Whaley said they received \$2.4 million due to the plan. Chair Nesmith asked if there were aspects of the plan of what they experienced that was not included, because they were just unknown. Ms. Whaley said there were some projects added and some were funded. Approving this will allow them to be funded for Hurricane Ian. She said even though Gadsden County was not directly impacted, the state bases it off tiers. Chair Nesmith asked about the mitigation fund and if they have some funds set aside for that? Mr. Dixon said she was talking about the big fund. Ms. Whaley said it is hazarding mitigation funds through the state and each county is allocated certain amount based on the damage the event caused. Chair Nesmith asked if they used all of the \$2.4 million? Mr. Dixon said they spent it all. Chair Nesmith confirmed it is a reimbursement fund. He asked who monitors compliance? Mr. Dixon said Ms. Whaley. Chair Nesmith asked for the deadline for submitting plan? Ms. Whaley said now. Chair Nesmith asked if they are working on 2022 plan? Ms. Whaley said the resolution will be adopted tonight, but the plan will go from 2022-2026. Chair Nesmith asked if they are late in getting any documentations to the federal government? Ms. Whaley said the other plan is expired so that is why they are trying to get this one in.

Commissioner Holt said the commissioners are responsible for Emergency Management. The FAC Conferences will talk about Emergency Management, that is why they approve grants from them. She wrote down to meet with the Emergency Management director, growth director and committee as soon as they can get a meeting because hurricane season is coming up. They have to have clarity because there are hazardous sites that they need to be aware of. Red Cross used to be over the emergency management program, then it went to the Sherriff's department, but they are still

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responsible. They need to schedule a meeting so they can know what is going on. She said the chairman will be in charge to sign off on everything.

Chair Nesmith asked how often does the committee meet? Ms. Whaley said at least annually. Chair Nesmith asked if there was something that the board did that precluded them from getting the information in earlier? Ms. Whaley said no.

**Commissioner Green** said if they are not impacted, then they are awarded some type of funding based on the tiers. He asked what can they use those funds for, if we were not affected? Ms. Whaley said we were not affected by hurricane Ian but we were included in the funds. It can cover any project on the element project list. Ms. Keeler said they can always add to the list.

Commissioner Hinson said he noticed they were able to receive funds for the EMS station. He asked if they ever contacted the town of Havana to figure out how they can partner with them.

*Commissioner Green stepped out at 5:02 p.m.*

Ms. Whaley said the town of Havana is always included in their LMS updates. They play a major part in it and they are always present at every annual meeting. They have a couple projects on the list and there are over 50 projects on the list currently. Commissioner Hinson asked if she has the list with her at the moment. Ms. Whaley said yes. He said he had a meeting with the town manager and he brought it up. He asked who determines where those fundings goes to? Ms. Whaley said those funds did not come from LMS money, that project was because the requirements said for it to be on the list. Ms. Keeler said all applications for grants are approved by the board. When the application was submitted, some decisions were made at DEO. The original application included 2.5/2.8, included Quincy EMS Rehab and rehabbing Havana EMS. when the agreement came to the county, they the put entire amount \$2.8 into the Quincy EMS project. The application approved in 2021 did include those two projects. The funding requested was not sufficient. Commissioner Hinson thanked her for the job she is doing in Gadsden County. He asked why they waited to the last second for this? This is where all the money is at. It is called the money bag. He asked if the chairman is responsible to make sure committee meets? He just had to throw that out there.

*Commissioner Green returned at 5:07 p.m.*

Chair Nesmith asked how the committee was formed? Ms. Whaley said she was voted in to be the chair. At every annual meeting they can vote. Chair Nesmith asked if the former chair of Board of County Commissioners known about the meetings? Ms. Whaley said Commissioner Holt has sat in meetings.

Mr. Dixon said they sat with Ms. Whaley and what was happening, she was caught in the middle with the County and the Sherriff. The prior people did not work with her. They surrounded her with everyone to hit all the deadlines. It is a torturous process. Chair Nesmith asked who completed the previous LMS plan? Ms. Whaley said they had management experts to help.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if the county does not have all dirt roads listed, does that impact the mitigation funds? Ms. Whaley said not through this plan but through any recovery funds they get from an event. That is why they make sure any maintenance on roads, dirt roads and public roads, to make sure documentation throughout the year are being kept on the roads. When they do file for reimbursement, they have documentation to be reimbursed.

Commissioner Holt said after COVID and Hurricane Michael, we definitely have a need for a hospital. Liberty County just got a lump sum of money for add on to their hospital.

Commissioner Hinson said if the area is located at the Sheriff's Department, they can find funding to refurbish the entire building. He said at one point, TCC owned the Sheriff's building, and now the board owns it. Since they own it, are they thinking about refurbishing that? Mr. Dixon said no, they are trying to get the new building built now. Commissioner Hinson said once they leave, it is too late. Also, once they leave the building, it is no longer a critical facility. He asked is it theirs now, or the Sheriff's? Mr. Dixon said emergency management was just law enforcement, now emergency management is more about hurricanes and heavy machinery. It is a logistical nightmare they are going through. There is an agreement between the Sheriff and the County about how emergency management should be run. Commissioner Hinson asked the board to go get their certification in emergency management class.

Chair Nesmith thanked Ms. Whaley for keeping them in the know. He said she has the boards full support.

**Motion to Adjourn**

**WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE WORKSHOP WAS  
ADJOURNED AT 5:30 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**KIMBLIN NESMITH, Chair**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**