

**AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON FEBRUARY 22, 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
 Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair NeSmith called the workshop to order at 4:05 p.m., Commissioner Green gave the invocation and the Chair then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair NeSmith welcomed everyone to the workshop.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AND COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)

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. Chair NeSmith read aloud the above statement.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Welcome

2. Discussion of North Florida Rural Health Corporation

Col. Walter L. “Mickey” Presha, Board Chair of North Florida Rural Health Corp., appeared before the Board and he introduced others that were with him.

Kyle Kwik, President and CEO of North Florida Rural Health Corp. appeared before the Board. He said it was the mission of NFRHC (North Florida Rural Health Corp) to bring premier healthcare providers as well as service to meet the needs of the citizens of Gadsden County.

Commissioner Holt appeared at 4:12 p.m.

He continued by saying they would work with local organizations, minimize barriers through telemedicine and transportation to help meet the needs of the community. He said their purpose is to come into the Chattahoochee building to provide Health Care Services with the anticipation to expanding their services to include the following: OBGYN, pediatrics, cardiology, mental health and behavior health, pharmacy, dental, internal medicine and infectious diseases.

Floyd Hill, CIO with NFRHC, appeared before the Board and gave background on Col. Presha.

Mr. Kwik reappeared before the Board and introduced Gayle Williams, CEO, along with the rest of the Advisory Board; the Executive team, the Medical Director and the Providers.

He explained for the first 12 months of operations, NFRH has had an operating budget of approximately \$4,037,000. The estimated economic impact is over \$7,000,000. Studies show that for every \$1 Million spent from indigent care funds, on average 6.1 new jobs are associated to it.

Commissioner Green stepped out at 4:20 p.m.

Mr. Kwik said there was a great need for services in the services that were planned to be provided with the pharmacy, lab, primary health/behavioral health, dental, transportation and telehealth. He stated through the Ordinance, hospitals, clinics and other providers were eligible for this funding. He stated they were asking for a 3-year funding request. They are asking for \$1 Million per year fund allocation. Year 1 the funds are placed in a pool for NFRH to draw down for patient services. They are asking in Year 2 \$100,000 is advanced for the LIP matching program via IGT to ACHA for uncompensated medical care cost and cost of medical services for the uninsured. The clinic would provide \$100,000 worth of services before drawing from the pool. He said those funds would allow them to bring in specialty services, additional physicians and additional services to the County. He added NFRH must see \$100,000 worth of patients, actually 666 patients before they are able to draw the remaining balance of the \$900,000. He explained they would be taking the \$100,000 out of the \$1 Million and placing it with the State (ACHA). He said the State would give them additional funds on top of that for doing so, along with the Federal government. He said when the County puts up money, the State says if 0.39¢, the State would put up a \$1.00 and is matched with the Federal government. In Year 3, \$100,000 is advanced for the LIP matching program via IGT to ACHA for uncompensated medical care cost and cost of medical services for the uninsured. He said NFRH must see the patients in order to receive the \$100,000 that was sent to the State. The Clinic will provide \$100,000 worth of services before drawing from pool. He said the County would be getting a 2 for 1, the citizens were being seen, still providing services and getting money from the State, as well as from the Federal government. He said the intake process was very important. When a patient comes in to see a provider, they are asked if they have any insurance; once it is determined they do not have insurance, they are triaged and placed with a Medicaid specialist and see what services they are qualified for. He said the patient would receive that needed coverage in which they were eligible for and would reduce the number of uninsured patients while improving the overall Health Care.

He said they were asking for every uninsured patient, there is \$150.00 charge, also with dental; Pharmacy is AWP (average wholesale price) – 20 he said this was the same thing they charge Medicaid and Medicare; they would receive a 20% discount on the price of medicine. Every patient will have lab costs that are passed through to the County and they would not make any money on that; the transportation is the national standard and is \$45 for the first ten miles and \$3.65 per additional mile for non-ambulatory transportation.

The expected outcomes were:

- Increased access to primary care services;
- Increased access to behavior health services;
- Increased access to dental services;
- Reduction in the rates of avoidable Emergency Room visits (ER diversions).

He said the ER diversions, according to a report by CBS News in 2020, Florida was the most expensive state for emergency room visits. Moderate to severity ER patients are billed an average of \$3,102 for an ER visit before insurance. They County's cost would be \$150. Instead of a patient going to the ER, they would go to a clinic and for every 500 visits, it would be a savings of \$1.5 Million.

He went back to the expected outcomes:

- Lower rates of preventable hospitalizations and readmissions; and
- Better rankings in health outcomes and health factors on the annual County Health Rankings report. Currently, Gadsden County was ranked numbers 63 and 64 out of 67 of the most unhealthy counties in Florida.

They have put together a comprehensive plan strategy process of procedures to better the outcome for Gadsden County.

Chair NeSmith Smith asked where they were currently operating and Mr. Kwik said currently they were not operating, the first will be in Chattahoochee, the second in Gretna and the third was ion conversation with Franklin County.

Commissioner Green asked if he could give them a county that has a similar program and Mr. Kwik said Ms. Williams would address that.

Ms. Gaye Williams, Advisory Board Chair, appeared before the Board and gave her background. Polk County overwhelmingly approved the ½ cent discretionary sales surtax for Indigent Health Care in 2004 and was approved again for 25 years in 2016. She said there were two plans in Polk County, the Polk County Health Plan and a Grants and Aid application. Each one has eligibility requirements and provides for specific care under each program. Her organization has a fixed price contract and they submit quarterly reports to the Polk County Indigent Care Department. All contracts were subject to audit and monitoring.

Commissioner Green asked if Polk County would be a good county to look at that did this type of services for their citizens. Ms. Williams said she could leave them the contact information of a young lady she spoke with prior to coming.

Chair NeSmith asked if the group and she said the Polk County Indigent Health Care Department. She said the board of county commissioners had a Citizens Oversight Committee and that committee channels the processing through the Department of Health and Human Services in Polk County. Chair NeSmith said the organization was under the county and she responded yes. Chair NeSmith asked if the organization was still in existence and she said yes.

Col. Presha reappeared before the Board and said he was proud to say they flew under the radar and was told they should have been a model for the Nation. He explained they were planning to put one in Chattahoochee planned to model the program after the Polk County program.

Commissioner Green asked from the \$1 Million set aside, how would it grow?

Col. Presha said the growth that Mr. Kwik talked about with the matching fund. The money could be set aside and invested but the biggest thing was the matching fund.

Commissioner Green asked once approved, what was the expected opening date they had in mind.

Commissioner Holt asked about the state portion, it was approximately 30¢ on the dollar.

Commissioner Green left at 4:50 pm

Commissioner Holt said the needed to schedule this and move on it.

Chair NeSmith said this Board understood the need for health care services in the County. Ms. Daniels explained, hypothetically, the first year, \$1 Million will be placed in a pool for NFRH to draw down for patient services; they will send \$100,000 to the State, the next year \$100,000 is advanced for the LIP matching program via IGT to ACHA for uncompensated medical care cost and cost of medical services for the uninsured. The clinic will provide \$100,000 worth of services before drawing before drawing from the pool.

Commissioner Holt asked Ms. Daniels the amount in the Indigent Care fund and she said right now around \$2 Million but there were things that had to be paid from that. Commissioner Holt asked how much interest was collected every year and she was not sure. Commissioner Holt asked for a copy of the distribution of the last five years.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 5:13 pm.

There was more conversation concerning the amount that is paid out of the Indigent account and how much was left on the bond. Commissioner Holt also stated this information was needed before the meeting.

Commissioner Simpkins returned at 5:19 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson left at 5:21 p.m.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
February 22, 2023 – North Florida Rural Health Corp. Workshop

There was more round table discussion regarding the program between the Commissioners and the representatives from North Florida Rural Health Corp.

Commissioner Hinson returned at 5:29 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson suggested they have a workshop on the indigent tax program so they could better understand everything.

Commissioner Hinson thanked them for coming.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:39 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk