

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FL ON MAY 15TH, 2023 AT 5:00 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  
Adriana Quijada, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair NeSmith started the workshop at 5:00 pm. Commissioner Hinson provided invocation and Chair NeSmith led into the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

**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](mailto: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.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Discussion of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)/CARES Funds**

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. He stated today was more of a discussion to present ideas and go forward from there. He asked Ms. Daniels to come forward.

Commissioner Green stated he would have to leave early.

Commissioner Holt asked if they would do the presentation first and then have a discussion? Chair NeSmith stated yes. Commissioner Holt stated she had another meeting that was already scheduled and she would try to stay as long as she could.

Ms. Daniels stated the workshop was initially supposed to be related to ARPA but also provided information on CARES Act. She stated the differences between them was that the funding for ARPA was provided directly to Gadsden County from the U.S. Department of Treasury. It was not administered through the State of Florida, as the CARES funding. She went through the rest of the presentation.

Commissioner Green asked for clarification. He asked if the project's funding dashboard was from the ARPA or CARES? Ms. Daniels stated ARPA. She stated under CARES they could not do non-profit allocations.

Chair NeSmith asked if it was American Rescue that funded the food cards. Ms. Daniels stated yes.

Ms. Daniels stated the current/ recent obligations for ARPA:

- Department of Elderly Affairs \$475,000
- Emergency Repair Program \$300,000
- County-Wide Bonus Program \$730,000
- Ambulance Chassis (remaining balance) \$59,398

Total was \$1,564,398

Funds pending obligation:

Total ARPA funds awarded: \$8,868,920.00. Remaining funds pending obligation: \$3,833,548.99

Ms. Daniels moved on to the CARES ACT presentation. The CARES Act established the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund. As a result of the CARES ACT, Gadsden County was awarded a total of \$7,967,316 related to COVID-19.

Commissioner Hinson asked Chair NeSmith about the \$926,055 for the County Public Health Expenses. He asked if they could break down the expenses. Chair NeSmith stated they would go back to his question after the presentation.

Ms. Daniels stated the total project funding under CARES Act plan was \$4,858,404.28. She stated total CARES Funds rewarded was \$7,967,316. The CARES ACT (GENERAL FUND) Remaining Allocation was \$984,418.93. The ARPA Remaining Allocation was \$3,833,548.99.

Ms. Daniels stated the total direct funding under CARES. The total was \$243,441.29.

Commissioner Holt asked a question regarding the recommendations sheet. She asked about evaluating all parks so that way they could see what they need at all the parks. She stated they would have to research as Commissioners as to what they are doing in other areas in order for them to make sound decisions.

Commissioner Hinson stated he wanted to make sure people know they have a County Administrator that would be able to find information for them as well. He asked about the chamber redesign and if it was complete. Ms. Daniels stated they were pretty much complete but there were items they were still working on. She stated it was 95% complete. Commissioner Hinson asked where did the \$150,000 go towards. Ms. Daniels stated a lot of the money went into the audio issue. The room had to be completely reconfigured.

Commissioner Hinson also asked about the expenses for County Public Health. He was curious as to how the \$926,055.12 was distributed. Ms. Daniels stated she had a previous presentation that was given by Integrity group that had a lot of that information.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned the County-wide bonus program. He asked how much did they have in their general fund. Ms. Daniels stated about 5 million. Commissioner Hinson stated he thought they

should take it out of the general funds so they could continue to be more creative with the ARPA funds. Ms. Daniels stated the balance of those funds are still in the ARPA funds.

Commissioner Green stated he wanted to know the percentage given to Integrity and if it was negotiable. Mr. Dixon stated there was no percentage at this time. They were not contractually obligated to them. Commissioner Green asked if he knew the percentage for the \$795,000 with Integrity. Mr. Dixon stated 10%. Commissioner Green asked will they be able to negotiate the 10%. He asked how would they administer the program that they were about to implement. Mr. Dixon stated it depended on the program and complexity.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she wanted to request a copy of what the Federal government required for qualifications to administer those funds.

Mr. Dixon went over the ARPA/CARES Recommendations sheet for 2023-2024.

Commissioner Green asked how soon were they planning to have the next meeting? He asked if could they utilize some of the funding for the volunteer fire services. Mr. Dixon stated yes, they could. Mr. Dixon stated they planned to have the next meeting in the next 10 days.

Commissioner Hinson asked regarding volunteer fire departments, how much they planned on spending?

Commissioner Green stated his concern was the attraction in getting people engaged to volunteer.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she wanted them to fund the Boys and Girls Club but also wanted to make sure that they were considering they were not the only ones providing services for their youth. She stated the \$500,000 was good for them.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they were going to build their own Boys and Girls Club. He asked if they were creating a plan like they did for Senior Services to create a non-profit for the Boys and Girls Club in Gadsden County. Chair NeSmith stated they had the opportunity to do that.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she had done research on how the County had spent their ARPA funding. She stated they needed to put some funds towards marketing for the County. Commissioner Simpkins stated they need cameras to help citizens love where they live. She stated she thought that the \$475,000 for the Elderly Affairs included doing upgrades. She stated she did not see anything for parks on the sheet.

Chair NeSmith stated the County Administrator had gone to various parks to upgrade them. He asked Mr. Dixon if parks were included in the community centers. Mr. Dixon stated they did not have it as a recurring line item. They wanted to reevaluate every park. Chair NeSmith asked with existing parks, did they have a grant writer that could procure current funding for parks. Mr. Dixon stated they were looking for one right now.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned at-risk youth. They needed to set something aside for them and put some type of funding there.

Commissioner Holt stated they had employees before that wrote grants. She stated they need a consultant in there for Comprehensive Plan. She stated they also need to look at the Comprehensive

Plan for small housing. Commissioner Holt stated they need an account to move their businesses there.

Chair NeSmith asked the County Administrator when was the last time the County had developed the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Dixon stated it was no longer developed, just amended.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she agreed that the infrastructure piece was important but also believed they needed to make sure they have funds available. She would like to see the Parks and Rec.

Commissioner Hinson stated he agreed with Parks and Recs. He asked what was the price for solar lights. Mr. Dixon asked how would they decide which areas for solar lighting. Commissioner Hinson stated once they determine the cost. Mr. Dixon stated the lights would be unaffordable from Talquin.

Chair NeSmith asked Mr. Dixon about the deadline for ARPA Funds. Mr. Dixon stated December 24<sup>th</sup>. He asked if there was a deadline for the million dollars CARES funding. Mr. Dixon stated that had already rolled over and changed.

Commissioner Hinson asked Commissioner Simpkins if the County owns any of the land in St. Hebrews. Commissioner Simpkins stated she was not sure she would have to check.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 6:52 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**