

**AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JUNE 13, 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
 Adriana Quijada, Secretary to the Boards

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair NeSmith called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in 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@gadscencountyfl.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. Commissioner Green read aloud the above statement.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Introduction/Summary Highlights

Mr. Dixon appeared before the Board and gave an introduction and some summary highlights of the 2024 budget for the County

He said there were issues with EMS, fire departments, parks, Elder Affairs and Summer Youth. They were seeing an increase in the Building funds. He said some of the funds going to budget for: opioids and tribal funds. He said they have not done much multi-year planning but they need to. He said valuations were coming up.

Commissioner Holt arrived at 4:13 p.m.

Ms. Daniels appeared before the Board and said Mr. Dixon had given a great synopsis of the coming year.

Commissioner Hinson arrived at 4:15 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson stepped out at 4:15 p.m.

She said they had received preliminary fund balance information from the auditors and how they were doing with major revenue sources in this current fiscal year. They have received budgets from the Constitutional Officers and from some of the departments. The overall ending balance for the General Fund is \$6.293 Million; Transportation fund is \$3,212,519.00; the Building Inspection fund is \$457,561.00; and EMS Fund is \$768,860.00 as of September 30, 2022. She said as the Commission was aware, they transfer funds from the general fund to the EMS fund because what they collect in comparison to the decreases, they have to make adjustments.

Commissioner Hinson returned at 4:18 p.m.

She said as Mr. Dixon indicated, Building Inspection services were doing a lot better. She said in the past, they had to transfer money to them and now since they were doing better, they could utilize that money and budget to use their fund balance as revenue.

Commissioner Hinson stepped out at 4:21.

Chair NeSmith asked about the total fund balance and Ms. Daniels said they could not add all of the balances together for one balance as some fund balances were restricted.

Commissioner Holt asked about using the funds for Building Inspection to improve that department instead of moving it back to general funds. Ms. Daniels explained that those funds would be paying back for previous “loans”.

Commissioner Hinson returned at 4:24 pm.

Commissioner Holt said they were looking at putting up buildings on Joe Adams Road and look at upgrading that department and could the money be used for that instead of paying that money back to the general fund.

Commissioner Green asked if they were able to utilize some of the funds for a lead construction person? Ms. Daniels said they would have to search the statute to see what it states.

Commissioner Holt said at one time they had a Board of Contractors that used to meet on several issues. Ms. Daniels said she would ask Mr. Morris to look into that.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 4:38 pm.

Commissioner Holt returned at 4:35 pm.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they could schedule a workshop with the engineers to see what they are doing.

Mr. Dixon re-appeared. Chair NeSmith asked if they had met with engineers and Mr. Dixon said they had met them but not met with them.

Commissioner Holt said they did not need another workshop, they been workshopped to death and had not accomplished anything. They needed finalization to some of the workshops they have had. Chair NeSmith asked why he wanted to meet with engineers. Commissioner Hinson said they have two new firms and wanted to make sure they were headed in the right direction. Commissioner Holt said they could have them come in for a pre-meeting before one of the regular meetings.

Commissioner Hinson said they have yet to meet with the engineering firm and they bring in more money than any other organization they were working with. The engineering firms were very serious because they were the driving force of Gadsden County.

Summary of Effect

Chair NeSmith asked if they had a chance to go through and tighten up the budget? Mr. Dixon said they were constantly reviewing, but it was lean in the beginning.

Commissioner Holt said they need to look at the job market and look at the index in the county. They need to look at EMS costs in the surrounding counties for costs that have a hospital.

Mr. Dixon said EMS roughly collects 50% and the number continues to increase.

- Funds Balance Summary
- Ad Valorem Tax Revenue Summary

Ms. Daniels wanted to give an idea of where the County was at. She said they had budgeted for the CRA's. She asked them to remember when they budget, the budget is 95% of what they anticipate to collect.

- Constitutional Officers FY23/24 Budget Requests

She said the Clerk had an increase of 6%, Chair NeSmith asked if it was new hires or raises. Ms. Daniels said she would find out.

She said the Property Appraiser had vehicles coming off lease last year and they had to purchase the vehicles. Now they have to purchase one more vehicle and some software and their net effect for this year is around \$11,000.

They received the Sheriff's request and the total increase is 16% or approximately \$1.3 Million. If the millage rate stays where it is, they were anticipating only receiving \$1.8 million from ad valorem tax revenue. There is a \$400,000 increase in the budget next year for the FRS rate that went into effect and that will come off the top.

Commissioner Holt asked if the Sheriff's Office was willing to come back into CHP with the County. Ms. Daniels said that would be discussed in the upcoming meeting along with purchasing fuel from the County.

Commissioner Green asked about the jail. Mr. Dixon said they would not be able to bring it up to code. Commissioner Green said it belonged to the County and was in bad condition.

Chair NeSmith asked if all Constitutionals were seeking grant dollars for their own departments? Mr. Dixon said the Constitutionals were encouraged by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Holt said a few years ago they had put in a request for a new jail and courtroom and they need to look at that as a total entity.

Commissioner Hinson thought the BOCC refurbished the jail 6 or 7 years ago. He asked for documentation on what was done. He said they also need to put the jail in a remote area, maybe towards Liberty County. That might make the Quincy (I-10) exit a little more attractive with the jail not being there. He added they needed to identify land now for a future facility.

Commissioner Green said while they were talking about it, maybe they could schedule a field trip as a board to the facility and have a grading scale when they go.

Chair NeSmith asked if they had information on all county-owned buildings and Mr. Dixon said yes.

Supervisor of Elections

Ms. Daniels said there were two elections she has to prepare for before next year.

- Department Preliminary Recommended Budget FY23-24 vs. FY22-23

Commissioner Green stepped out at 5:23 p.m.

Ms. Daniels said there has been an increase of costs of supplies, etc. have gone up and that has been included in the budget.

Commissioner Green returned at 5:26 p.m.

Chair NeSmith said they have done a great job partnering with the municipalities and need to look at how to empower them to go after their own dollars. He said money and resources were out there.

Commissioner Holt wanted to check with the insurance carrier on the savings if the Sheriff's Department came back in. She said partnerships could also include grant for grant, etc.

2. Board of County Commissioners Priorities and Direction

Commissioner Green said he thought in the introduction, the Administrator already alluded to some of programs that were not completed, i.e., Senior services, etc.

Ms. Daniels said they want to start scheduling individual meetings with the commissioners to go over questions to get their wishes and priorities asap.

Ms. Daniels introduced a new staff person, Ms. Jenifer Carrier, as the new budget manager. She was a former auditor with the State and was a CPA.

Commissioner Green said he was very excited about the position being filled and welcomed her.

Ms. Daniels said the next budget workshop would not be until August 1st, and they will have to adopt the millage rate before then.

Ms. Daniels also recognized Sylvia Newman and her hard work.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:41 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

KIMBLIN NESMITH, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk