

**AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 1,  
2023 AT 4:00 PM, 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**  
                  **Ronterius “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                  **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                  **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                  **Tammy Young, Clerk’s Office**  
                  **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**

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

Chair NeSmith started Workshop at 4:07 pm. Chair NeSmith led into a moment of silence and 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@gadسدnecountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadسدnecountyfl.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. **Introduction/FY 2023/2024 Tentative Budget Overview**

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. He stated they have prepared big numbers in terms of what they believed to be their priorities. He stated they will ask tonight to approve a millage rate higher than what they have.

Ms. Daniels appeared before the Board. She stated they will present highlights of what was going on in the budget. She stated Ms. Burgess would be doing the presentation today. Ms. Daniels stated this budget was developed utilizing their current millage rate of 9.0000. The maximum is 10 mills. She stated they were going to be asking them at the regular meeting to set the tentative millage rate. They will also approve dates for 2 public hearings in September. She stated they could lower the millage rate before the final budget is adopted. They cannot raise it once they set

the tentative millage rate. If they raise it, they need to send out trim notices to every property owner in the County.

Commissioner Green asked if they could have what they currently have on their desk at least a few days prior to have time to go through it.

Chair NeSmith asked the County Administrator if they had any questions, who to direct them to. Mr. Dixon stated Mrs. Burgess, Ms. Daniels, or himself.

Ms. Burgess began her budget presentation. She stated the budget for 2024 is currently 63.4 million dollars. Chair NeSmith asked if that was the highest budget the County has experienced. Ms. Burgess stated yes.

Ms. Burgess stated the County Transportation is 5.8 million, which represents 9%. The EMS fund is 4.7 million which represents 8% of the total budget. The total of all the debt service funds was 3.1 million, which is 5%. The indigent ordinance surtax fund is 3% of their total budget, 2 million. Chair NeSmith asked which category was the Sheriff's located at. Ms. Burgess stated Fine and Forfeiture.

Ms. Burgess mentioned the FY 2024 changes in expenditures:

Sheriff's Office \$423,494  
Supervisor of Elections \$137,579  
Tax Collector \$103,000  
Property Appraiser \$96,602.  
EMS \$301,159  
Economic Development \$169,166  
Increase in FRS \$411,000  
Capital Projects \$780,500  
Elderly Affairs \$836,042  
Total: \$3,258,542

Commissioner Green asked if there was breakdown of the increases and the purpose of them. Ms. Burgess stated not in this package but they could provide those details.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she knew previously there was no budget for Elderly Affairs. She asked about the \$836,000 for 2023-24. Ms. Daniels stated they approved the budget of around \$475,00 for Elderly Affairs department for 6 months. She stated the \$836,000 was the amount for a full year. Commissioner Simpkins asked if they were able to maintain that level of expenditures, that was her concern. She asked what was the amount of the award. Ms. Daniels stated she was not sure if they award any specific amount. Mr. Dixon stated the \$475,000 did not include construction.

Commissioner Green stated they discussed in previous meetings that that particular Board that had been re-organized was going to also fight for other funding sources. He asked if they have started to apply. He asked if the \$836,000 would fit in their budget. Ms. Daniels stated the revenue that would support the \$836,000 would be partly coming from the grant, the congregate

meals portion. She stated the rest was being funded from leftover funding of the American Rescue plan.

Chair NeSmith stated he did not anticipate the \$836,000 and he had a lot of questions about this. Commissioner Green asked when were they scheduling their next workshop. He stated even if they budgeted the \$836,000, how long would they be able to do this? Mr. Dixon stated they have something called At A Glance where they are able to see all the numbers that are in Elderly Affairs. He stated there were also 2 positions that were carried in the Administrator's budget.

Chair NeSmith asked if they had any residual income coming to Gadsden Senior Services other than the 2 grants from 2 years ago. Mr. Dixon stated triple A had not increased their numbers in terms of people. He stated they had a funding source for the future that they will talk about.

Commissioner Simpkins stated if 2 of the positions from the Administrator was rolled over into Elderly Affairs, was there a decrease in the administrator personnel? She asked if it would balance out since it was no longer under the County Administrator. She asked if they replaced that expense with something else. Mr. Dixon stated no. Commissioner Simpkins stated then those 2 positions would balance out. Commissioner Simpkins stated her concern was sustainability. She asked in this budget, are they giving them funding again or are they going to be bringing funding to their Elderly Affairs Department. Mr. Dixon stated both elements of the plan have to move in concert to provide for this program. He stated they were mindful of the numbers that were out there.

Commissioner Green asked what was left with the ARPA budget. Ms. Daniels stated they have about \$3.8 million dollars. They did not have the remaining balance in the package. She stated they have to have that money allocated by next year and spent by 2026. She stated on the last page of the packet were some recommendations for the expenditure of the ARPA funds. She stated there was an agenda item going to the Board today to spend some of it this year. It would leave about \$3.4 million dollars.

Commissioner Green stated in reference to non-profits outside of senior services, they were supposed to have a workshop about the amount of funding that they would like to offer and categorizing some of the funding in certain areas. He stated they needed to get back on those workshops so they do not lose that money.

Ms. Burgess stated on pages 12 through 14, shows the expenditures by Department. Commissioner Simpkins stated under the County Commissioners Budget, there was a difference of \$309,000. She mentioned Ordinance 618 and stated they went up to \$250,000. She stated they were at \$80,000 for Black History and they also have Black History included in the \$250,000. Commissioner Simpkins stated she was fine with them having a good time, but they need to make sure they were being good stewards of their citizen's funds. Ms. Daniels stated the majority of that increase for the County Commissioners Budget was their liability insurance which went up \$250,000.

Commissioner Holt stated it has been a procedure that each Commissioner call the Administrator, sit down with the Budget Department, or whomever, and go do this. That way they would have a change to bring those numbers. She stated when they ask for these processes to be put in place,

They need to say that they want a reporting on how it affects the budget.

Commissioner Simpkins stated a lot of the times when she asks questions, she pretty much already had the answer but her constituents should know. Mr. Dixon stated that their intent was that in the next week, one of them would have the opportunity to meet with the staff and go through the numbers.

Commissioner Green asked what changes would be made from this document. Ms. Daniels stated they could have it up to date with what those numbers entailed. Commissioner Green asked how soon would they expect to see whatever changes were made. Ms. Daniels stated they were at a point where they were pencils down, until they got direction from the Board. The budget is tentatively balanced, unless they make some changes between now and the first public hearing. She stated when they presented that packet, they did not have all of their revenue estimates in.

Commissioner Simpkins stated for the foundation, if they were going to up to \$15,000, then they need to be making sure that they were doing something for their citizens. The kids going to FAMU need to benefit. She stated they needed to make sure it was earmarked for Gadsden County citizens and that they are getting some type of scholarship out of the \$15,000. She stated the Black History budget is still more because that \$15,000 really goes into the Black History budget. Mr. Dixon stated that was the object of the donation to the foundation. Commissioner Simpkins asked Dixon if the kids had received a scholarship. Mr. Dixon stated yes. Ms. Steele stated the scholarship was set up for band students. They have not had a band student applied for that scholarship. Commissioner Simpkins stated they needed to make sure to have the scholarship available for more students not just band students.

Ms. Burgess mentioned the Florida Retirement System and stated there was an increase required in funding which was a \$411,000 impact to their budget for retirement. She stated due to increase in inflation, there has been an increase in operating expenses such as supplies, postage, insurance, etc. She stated they did the one-time transfer of fund balance from debt service library fund to the general fund. Related to the debt service library, that funding was coming from the local government half cent sales tax. Since that has been paid off, something has to be done with those funds. In the FY 2024 tentative budget, the estimated \$2,029,003 proceeds from the half cent sales tax have been budgeted as a reserve for the following services:

Elderly Affairs: \$507,251  
Summer Youth Program: \$507,251  
Community Center: \$507,251  
Parks & Recreation: \$507,251

Ms. Burgess mention the Love Where You Live Campaign, including the following: advertising, signage, and multimedia. In addition, it includes community cleaning campaign spearheaded through public works. It also includes mobilization and equipment. It also includes enforcement personnel, hearing, postage, and magistrate. For FT 2023-24, and additional \$160,000 were allocated to fund this campaign. Ms. Burgess mentioned the general fund for Economic Development on page 19. The total Economic Development was \$378,040.

Ms. Burgess went on to page 20 from the packet. She stated right now, the budget was set at 9.00 millage rate and the total revenue generated at that millage rate would be 18.4 million. They budget 95% of that, so, 17.5 million. If they were to increase the millage rate to 9.25, it would be an additional \$487,675 that would be generated. Ms. Burgess stated page 23 of the presentation has some future outlooks of what they could do with some of the ARPA funds.

*Commissioner Hinson appeared at 5:23 pm.*

Commissioner Green mentioned page 18 and the 2 million dollars that are in those particular categories. He asked if they have to be allocated in that matter or if it was able to go into general funds. Mr. Dixon stated they could be allocated anyway they wish. Commissioner Green asked how long were they able to continue this. Mr. Dixon stated until 2038. Commissioner Green asked when that is over, were they able to vote again to ask for that half cent for continuations of the programs that they have instilled across the board? Mr. Dixon stated yes sir.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned page 12 of the packet. She asked what was the increase for regarding Gadsden Community Health Department. Ms. Burgess stated that was the liability insurance. Commissioner Simpkins asked what was the Aid to Private Organizations – Big Bend Transit. Ms. Daniels stated they pay for the Havana Express, the Quincy Shuttle, and Gadsden Express she believed. Commissioner Simpkins asked about the Gadsden County Senior Citizens and where the \$7,400 goes to. Ms. Daniels stated that was the insurance on the Simon Scott building. Commissioner Simpkins stated they have \$50,000 reserved for non-profits. She stated there was more than just one nonprofit in Gadsden County. There is more than one providing services to their youth. They have focused on one. She stated they should not pick and choose who they were going to be generous to.

Commissioner Simpkins stated when she got on the Board in November, there was \$500,000 allocated for the Boys and Girls Club for the purchase of a building. Now, she saw where they were at, with appropriation from the State, \$4,700,000. She wanted to know what the Boys and Girls Club were bringing to the table because there were other organizations that were providing services. Commissioner Simpkins also mentioned lighting and stated they do not have anything budgeted for it. She thought it was a safety issue that needed to be addressed.

Commissioner Holt stated they need to make something that generates money. She stated they have no money to spend if they do not make money. She stated if they were able to look at using the 2 million dollars to put pipes in the ground for sewer lines to increase business opportunities to come here. She asked if the 4 services shown on page 18 (Elderly Affairs, Summer Youth Program, Community Center, Parks & Recreation) would be able to be funded out of their regular budget. Ms. Daniels stated they currently already have budgeted for the Elder Affairs; they had the revenue from the grant and ARPA funds. Commissioner Holt stated if they did not have any more of those funds coming in, could they budget these items? Ms. Daniels stated they would not be able to fully fund Elder Affairs. Commissioner Holt stated she was trying to find ways to get infrastructure money.

Commissioner Holt stated the Economic Development plan requires more money. She stated they would not get any businesses with the \$378,000. They need to have serious plans in order to look

at those three I-10 exits that are left. She stated they needed to have an Economic Development plan.

Commissioner Green stated infrastructure was important. He wanted to have a more detailed conversation on this, especially now having a Director for Economic Development. Commissioner Green stated there was no way they could service their County with just \$50,000.

Commissioner Hinson asked the County Administrator if they still give tax abatements. Mr. Dixon stated yes to only one company. Ms. Daniels stated Hoover Company. Commissioner Hinson stated they needed to focus on Infrastructure. Commissioner Hinson mentioned having a plan on how they can use the \$2 million for infrastructure.

2. Questions/Answers

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:52 P.M.

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**