

**AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN
AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA
ON AUGUST 9, 2023 AT 2:00 P.M., THE
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD,
VIZ:**

PRESENT: **Kimblin NeSmith, Chair, District 3**
 Eric Hinson, Vice-Chair, District 1
 Alonzetta Simpkins, District 3
 Brenda Holt, District 4
 Ronterius “Ron” Green, District 5
 Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
 Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
 Adriana Quijada, Clerk Secretary to the Boards

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair NeSmith started the Workshop at 2:02 pm. Chair NeSmith stated they were there to discuss ARPA and the budget. Commissioner Green provided Invocation. Chair NeSmith led into the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (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@gadscdencountyfl.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 Simpkins read aloud the above statement.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Introduction

(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)

2. FY 2024 Tentative Budget Highlights

(Jenifer Burgess, Budget Manager / Georgette Daniels, County Administrator)

- [American Rescue Plan \(ARPA\) Remaining Funds](#)

- FY 2023-24
- FY 2024-25
- FY 2025-26

Ms. Daniels stated Ms. Burgess will be giving presentation on the remaining ARPA funds.

Commissioner Green asked about funding for the Sheriff's department. He asked if funds have been transferred out of ARPA funds to whatever account needs to be in. Ms. Daniels stated that was in the process of taking place. Commissioner Green asked if they had a date on when the money would be released to employees. Ms. Daniels stated that would have to come from the Sheriff's department.

Chair NeSmith asked if they needed an agenda item to transfer those funds. Ms. Daniels stated they do. It was coming from one fund to another. Chair NeSmith asked if it was on the agenda item for the next meeting. Ms. Daniels stated no. Commissioner Simpkins asked if they could add it in Tuesday's meeting. Ms. Daniels stated it was too late to advertise. Commissioner Simpkins asked Attorney Knowles if it had to be in the local paper. Attorney Knowles stated it would have to be in either Gadsden County Times or The Democrat.

Ms. Burgess appeared before the Board. She stated the purpose of this Workshop was to get Board direction on how to allocate the ARPA funds. They need to be allocated by December 2024 and spent by December 2026.

Commissioner Hinson appeared at 2:14 pm

Ms. Burgess stated the remaining funds is \$3,469,049 to be allocated. She stated they made recommendations on how to allocate funds. For Fiscal Year 23-24, they have a total of \$2,005,000. Some of the recommendations made were to allocate \$475,000 to Elderly Affairs and \$200,000 for Grant match for various grant opportunities. Ms. Burgess stated for Fiscal Year 24-25, they have recommended allocation of \$1,360,000. \$475,000 for Elderly Affairs and \$360,000 for EMS Ambulance Remount were some of the recommendations. She stated there would be a remaining \$104,049 and they recommended that to go towards Parks Upgrade and Expansion.

Commissioner Simpkins returned at 2:16 pm

Commissioner Green asked if they were still going after grants for parks. If they get those grants, could they move those allocated dollars out of Parks and to something else. He stated they could get a lot out of FRDAP and other grants.

Ms. Daniels stated they are still utilizing the FRDAP grant process. She stated they could get over \$50,000. Ms. Daniels stated if they were to get additional funding through FRDAP grant process for Parks, then yes, they could re-allocate funding to something else.

Chair NeSmith stated Commissioner Holt will be attending through via speakerphone.

Commissioner Simpkins asked about the \$475,000. She asked if they would be able to sustain their Elderly Affairs Department.

Commissioner Green asked if they could give a number of the Grant they received already. Mr. Dixon mentioned the homemaking program. Mr. Dixon stated since they paid the debt off, one of the things they thought it could fund was Elder Affairs.

Commissioner Green asked what was the estimate amount budget wise. Ms. Daniels stated it was over \$800,000. Commissioner Green asked what was the estimate amount if awarded grant. Ms. Daniels stated \$500,000.

Commissioner Green wanted to get a general understanding of what they were looking at to sustain the \$380,000. Ms. Daniels stated it currently generates about 2 million a year.

Commissioner Simpkins asked when was the debt service paid off. Ms. Daniels stated she believed it was last fiscal year.

Commissioner Hinson stated he was an advocate for the Seniors. He mentioned public-private partnership. Commissioner Hinson stated they should not be talking about anything else other than infrastructure. Chair NeSmith stated he agreed with Hinson on Infrastructure

Ms. Daniels stated they could see what they are recommending but of course the Commissioners make the final decision.

Commissioner Holt asked how were they funding the Veterans transportation. Ms. Daniels stated it was through their general fund. She stated they have to fund those; they do not generate money.

Chair NeSmith asked Ms. Daniels if they had same grants for Veterans office. Ms. Daniels stated could not speak on behalf of Mr. Jackson.

Chair NeSmith stated they need to focus on infrastructure. He stated they need to provide resources to the Director.

Commissioner Holt stated the problem was that she asked for a grants department. There are grant dollars for Infrastructure.

Commissioner Green stated they have hired a grant director now; asked when she could provide a synopsis.

Chair NeSmith mentioned neighboring counties budget was \$200 million due to going after Grants. He asked if they had individuals here in the County who was going after grants besides the Director.

Commissioner Green stated even if the others are not experienced to go after grants, they need to have that individual who is spear heading.

Commissioner Simpkins stated when she is looking at the budget, they are paying some nice salaries. She believed they are capable of putting grants together. Each department could provide their information.

Commissioner Holt appeared at 3:00 pm

Chair NeSmith asked Ms. Daniels how did Chief find Grants. Ms. Daniels stated she could not speak for Chief Hood but grants were unique to the area that he works in.

Chair NeSmith stated if a department brings in \$100,000 and they could supplant... Ms. Daniels stated there were rules against that. They cannot use a grant to supplant what they already funded.

Commissioner Green asked about the projective outlook on the funds. He asked when did they have to solidify it. Ms. Daniels stated by December 2024.

Commissioner Green stated if they hired Economic Director then they need to hear from him.

Ms. Daniels stated this list was developed based on the guidance provided from ARPA funding.

Chair NeSmith asked if all the directors hired go to workshops or conferences where those grant resources are constantly discussed. Mr. Dixon stated for the first time almost everyone traveled this year. They all are searching for Grants.

Commissioner Green stated that his concern as it related to the Economic Director was what he was needing for Infrastructure. They need to know what their future looks like.

Commissioner Holt stated the Economic Development portion requires funding. She asked what kind of funding. Mr. Dixon stated they would recommend to them that they dedicate a piece of that revenue source to economic development to build that pot.

Chair NeSmith asked the County Administrator if they have a Grant Coordinator. Mr. Dixon stated no.

Chair NeSmith asked when was the next strategic planning workshop.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 3:34 pm.

Commissioner Hinson stated a person in Housing created positions to hire people.

Holt returned at 3:36 pm.

Commissioner Green stated they need to sit down individually with the Economic Director. He asked Mr. Dixon what they could use for Infrastructure.

Mr. Dixon stated if they could give him a couple weeks. He has been meeting with plan counsel.

Chair NeSmith stated this was an urgency for them. They need to be focused on getting jobs in Gadsden County. Mr. Dixon stated they have Cities doing stuff now.

Commissioner Holt stated did 10-million-dollar bond for Roads. Commissioner Simpkins asked if they were to get a Bond, would they be able to use that towards the new bond. Ms. Daniels stated they could pledge the revenue to pay the debt service.

Commissioner Hinson stated once they start building infrastructure, they need to start looking into moving a prison near Liberty County, not as many people there.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned engineering firms and them raising money.

Mr. Dixon stated they were still running behind money from the last firm.

Commissioner Hinson asked about refurbishing of the buildings.

Commissioner Green stepped out at 4:03 pm

Commissioner Green returned at 4:06 pm

Mr. Dixon stated the County generally gave people 0 -100 dollar a month lease in exchange that they will maintain all facilities.

Commissioner Hinson asked what if the whole AC unit was broken. Do they take care of that responsibility?

Commissioner Holt mentioned about St. Johns not being on the packet. She stated they were supposed to get a list of parks and what is needed. Ms. Daniels stated she knew some bathrooms needed attention. Commissioner Holt stated St Johns did not need a bathroom?

Commissioner Holt stated they have \$25,000 for community cameras. She stated she thinks they will need more.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 4:23 pm

Commissioner Hinson stated he was embarrassed of the condition of the park. He noticed holes in the restrooms and spider webs. They need to look at all parks. Parks are about quality of life.

Commissioner Holt returned at 4:25 pm

Commissioner Hinson stated they need to bold enough to take care of all parks.

Chair NeSmith told the County Administrator to get with the School Board to work on lights.

Questions/ Answers

MOTION TO ADJOURN

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED
THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:02 P.M.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk