

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON AUGUST 15, 2023 AT 4:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

PRESENT: **Eric Hinson, Vice-Chair, District 1**
 Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2
 Brenda Holt, District 4
 Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5
 Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
 Opal McKinney-Williams, Attorney
 Adriana Quijada, Clerk Secretary to the Boards

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Holt started Workshop at 4:04 pm. Commissioner Holt led into moment of silence and 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@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. Commissioner Simpkins read aloud the above statement.

Commissioner Hinson appeared at 4:06 pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Introduction (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)

Mr. Dixon stated they have heard their comments regarding ARPA and the funding that they have. He stated they have put those requests into some financial order to meet their concerns on infrastructure and their desire to fund infrastructure into the future. He stated they have included every number of financial capabilities that they thought they could. He stated Ms. Burgess would walk through it with them.

2. **American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Remaining Funds** (Jenifer Burgess, Budget Manager /
Georgette Daniels, County Administrator)

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

Ms. Burgess appeared before the Board. She stated they took the comments from the last ARPA workshop and tried to re-work numbers. One of the changes they made was that they removed the recommendation to use the \$475,000 from ARPA for Elderly Affairs and they were now recommending to use the half cent sales tax, it was a recurring funding source. Another recommendation they removed was that they previously had \$200,000 in grant matching funds and they removed it; instead of using a grant to match other grants, they could use other funding sources for grant funds. She stated they previously had a Community Business Lighting Feasibility study, but some of what the Commissioners mentioned was that they did not have any funds for the actual lighting. So, they included \$150,000 towards a Light Pilot program. In addition, they increased the amount for Parks Upgrade and Expansion from \$180,000 to \$350,000. Ms. Burgess stated they were also recommending Infrastructure Feasibility study for \$130,000. They are recommending \$225,000 to be used for economic development. Another change they did compared to the last ARPA workshop was they added an additional \$100,000 for the Simon Scott (Elderly Affairs) building expansion. So, now instead of \$100,000, they were recommending \$200,000. She stated in total, what they were recommending for the fiscal year 2023-2024 was to allocate \$2,230,000 from the ARPA Funds. For fiscal year 2024-2025, they also removed the \$475,000 that they previously recommended for Elderly Affairs. She stated for Parks Upgrade and Expansion there was an increase to \$400,000 for fiscal year 2024-2025. They added additional funds for lighting in the amount of \$100,000. She stated the total funding allocation they were recommending was \$1,135,000. Ms. Burgess stated for the fiscal year 2025-2026, they were recommending the remaining allocation with the ARPA Funds which is \$104,048.99 to be used for Parks Upgrade and Expansion. She stated these were all suggestions and the Board would give the direction.

Commissioner Hinson asked what was the costs to implement lighting now? Mr. Dixon stated the \$100,000 was a guesstimate for the lighting. They need to have that feasibility study. Commissioner Green wanted to know if they could utilize some of the \$150,000 for fire services. He stated he would love to know how many volunteer firefighters they have to see if they could budget in some type of

stipend for them for their services. He stated they should have some type of luncheon or something to that effect to show their appreciation for those volunteers. He wanted the Commissioners and County Administrator to ponder on this and give some thoughts. Mr. Dixon stated the Chiefs are looking at a stipend and some kind of bonus for the volunteer firefighters.

Commissioner Hinson asked about fire hydrants. Mr. Dixon stated Talquin owned most of the lines. He stated most of the lines are 4 inches, and they need to be 6 inches to support a hydrant. Talquin would not invest on their own so it would be the County and/or the City. Commissioner Hinson asked if they could get the cost on that.

Commissioner Green asked if there were any particular areas they were already considering for the feasibility study. Mr. Dixon stated they wanted to sit down with the City because they have projects at certain degrees. He stated the City of Quincy projects require a new water tower.

Commissioner Holt stated Commissioner Hinson brought up a good point in the last meeting on bonding money. She stated everyone has to meet first before they know what to bond for in economic development. She stated she looks at manufacturing because it paid better and it causes them to hire more people.

Commissioner Hinson asked how much did it cost for solar lights. Commissioner Simpkins stated she reached out to a couple of solar companies. She stated the price range would be around \$4,000 to \$12,000, depending on the type and the range.

Commissioner Hinson stated they needed to be aggressive on fire hydrants. Dixon stated the Chief informed him they already met with Talquin and they would get back to them on it. Commissioner Holt stated they had discussed before about possibly putting in a tank in some of the outlined areas.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they have started using the \$300,000 for the emergency housing. Mr. Dixon stated yes. Commissioner Green stated it was from his understanding that someone from the Housing department would be at the 6 o'clock meeting tonight. He stated he spoke to Ms. Sonya as it related to some of the funding.

Commissioner Green asked if they all had an opportunity to meet with the Finance Director or Ms. Burgess or Ms. Daniels. Commissioner Simpkins stated she met with Ms. Burgess as it related to the ARPA.

Ms. Burgess mentioned the Half Cent Sales Tax. She stated one of the things they included was an estimate of \$800,00 for the Debt Service Bond Payment for Infrastructure. She stated she was aware that infrastructure was a priority to the Commissioners and they considered potentially some kind of bond. The next recommendation they had was to use some of it for Elderly Affairs so they put \$500,000 and that would be until Elderly Affairs could be able to sustain themselves fully. She stated they were recommending \$250,000 for the Boys and Girls Club Operation. She stated this was just a recommendation that they put together for the Commissioners to discuss and provide direction. They were also recommending \$450,000 for Economic Development.

Commissioner Green mentioned Boys and Girls Club. He had concerns over the operation of this club and what they were bringing to the table. Mr. Dixon stated the money they have in Parks was for building parks. It is not for the operation of community centers.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if there were any additional funding, other than what they have in their budget, to go towards fire services. Ms. Daniels stated they were putting up to \$150,000 of the ARPA funding for services. She stated fire has their own budget. Commissioner Simpkins asked if they increased this year in their fire budget. Mr. Dixon stated they want to do the fire assessment and figure out what it was that they needed and to also have a recurring source of money to put into it. Commissioner Simpkins stated if they could try to figure out how they could maneuver some of the \$2 million to allocate towards fire services. Mr. Dixon stated to give them until after the bonds service meeting.

Commissioner Hinson stated 100% of the Half Cent Sales Tax should go to infrastructure.

Commissioner Green asked about issues about Quincy fire contract. Mr. Dixon stated the City had requested a meeting with them on fire and a number of subjects. Mr. Dixon stated the \$800,000 would hopefully give the County \$15 million dollars to invest in infrastructure. The \$450,000 was just

money to be piled up by the Economic Development Director. Commissioner Hinson stated if they put \$30-40 million dollars towards infrastructure, it would sell itself.

Commissioner Green stated they were all in favor of having a meeting with the City so they could come to some type of conclusion as it related to fire services. He stated they needed a workshop soon for fire services.

Commissioner Holt stated they need some type of data so they know what they are putting their money in. Commissioner Green stated there should be an ongoing workshop on a quarterly basis with fire services and EMS.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned bonds and asked Commissioner Hinson if he was saying to take that entire \$2million dollars to put into bond. Commissioner Hinson stated once they start building, the people would come. He stated they could start with \$2 million and go down. They need to find the number they were looking for.

Commissioner Hinson stated they need to address immediate needs now. He stated they needed to focus on infrastructure of the Fire Department first.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 5:07 pm.

3. Questions/Answers

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, VICE-CHAIR HINSON DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:10 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

KIMBLIN NESMITH, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk