

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN
AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA
ON AUGUST 15, 2023 AT 6:00 P.M., THE
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD,
VIZ:**

PRESENT: **Kimblin E. NeSmith, Chair, District 3**
 Eric F. Hinson, Vice-Chair, District 1
 Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2
 Brenda A. 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 and Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Hinson called the meeting to order at 6 pm. Commissioner Green provided invocation. Commissioner Hinson led into the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Amendments and Approval of Agenda

Mr. Dixon stated they had 4 amendments to the agenda. Item 1A: Presentation by Conexon, Item 8A: Approval of FL Department of Law Enforcement Salary Assistance Grant for Fiscally Constrained Counties Grant, Item 8B: Approval of Letter of Intent to Renew the Employee Agreement for the Gadsden County Administrator, and Item 8C: Approval of South Adams Street Sidewalk Supplemental Agreement.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED AND COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Awards, Presentations, and Appearances

1. Recognition of Alma Littles, M.D.
(Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners)

Commissioner Green provided Recognition of Honor to Ms. Alma Littles.

1A. Conexon Presentation

Leslye Krampe appeared before the Board. She provided a presentation on Conexon.

CONSENT

Chair NeSmith stated he had been with Legal Counsel today regarding some matters and asked Attorney McKinney-Williams if he could make an amendment to the agenda so they could bring those items forward. Attorney McKinney-Williams stated yes. Chair stated he would like to add it as item 7 and move the current Item 7 to Item 7A. Chair NeSmith called for a motion to bring forth a presentation from Legal Counsel.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA.

Chair NeSmith called for motion for the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Hinson asked to pull Item 3 for discussion.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

2. Approval of Agreement with Sonitrol to upgrade the User Access to the Edward J. Butler Building

(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator / Allan Meeks, Facilities Director)

3. Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contracts - State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) and Gadsden Emergency Repair Program (ER)

(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator /Sonya D. Burns, SHIP Housing Coordinator)

4. Approval of Service Agreement to allow Johnson Controls to provide annual inspections for Fire Alarm Essential Services at the Gadsden County Jail

(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator / Allan Meeks, Facilities Director)

5. Approval of the Gadsden County Behavioral Health Transportation Plan

(Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator /Colonel Bobby Collins, GCSO)

ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

Commissioner Hinson pulled item 3 for discussion.

Mr. Dixon stated for them to bring that item back on the next meeting. He stated they will still discuss and approve this item today but to not consider L. Jackson and it would come back to them at a different time. Mr. Dixon explained Item 3. Commissioner Hinson stated his heartburn was that it was catered to one district. Commissioner Green stated he was hoping that the Housing Director would be here this evening. He stated there was a couple applications submitted from his district. He stated the Housing Director was supposed to give a report on the applications submitted. Commissioner Green asked Mr. Dixon if he had any knowledge on the applications submitted. Mr. Dixon stated they have

received 40-50 applications in the last few weeks. Commissioner Green asked if they know the amount of money in their budget still and if there was a deadline. Mr. Dixon stated there is no deadline. Green stated need to find a way to amend this.

Commissioner Simpkins stated they should be able to set the requirements for those funds. She stated she would like to see the numbers and the breakdown as it related to how many citizens have been served in each district. She wanted to make sure that if a citizen had been called and they missed a call, that they do not just pass by them.

Commissioner Hinson asked why would they put those restrictions on their citizens who need help. He stated the money should be divided into a fifth, that way everybody could be represented in the County. Commissioner Holt stated if they want to change the application process, they make policy. Commissioner Hinson stated each Commissioner could get \$100,000 that would go directly into their community. Commissioner Simpkins stated for them to hold the \$150,000 until they establish guidelines.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

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. Mr. Dixon read aloud the above statement.

Janet Watson, 2793 Sycamore Rd

Janet Watson stated will give her three minutes to her husband, Mike Watson.

Mike Watson, 2793 Sycamore Rd

Mr. Watson appeared before the Board. He was there to discuss Sycamore Rd.

Commissioner Green returned at 7:11 pm

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 7:13 pm

Commissioner Simpkins returned at 7:14 pm

PUBLIC HEARINGS

6. Public Hearing: Willscot Hammock Creek Conceptual/Preliminary Site Plan (SP 2023-01)

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. He stated they have Ms. Ellen present who will be presenting on behalf of Mr. Stiell.

Ellen Andrews read through item 6. She stated this item was presented to the Board for consideration of a request for approval for Conceptual/ Preliminary Site Plan for Willscot Hammock Creek SP 2023-01.

Carmen Greene appeared before the Board to discuss the above item. Commissioner Holt asked how long were the trucks that were going to be coming out of there. Ms. Greene stated they will have 10 large trucks exiting each day. Commissioner Holt mentioned turning lanes. Ms. Greene stated the turn lanes that were mentioned in the original traffic study do appear to have been put in. Commissioner Holt asked about pollution. Ms. Greene stated it would be taken care of by storm water ponds. Commissioner Holt asked if there were any concerns for the applicant about any of the recommendations from Planning and Zoning. Ms. Greene stated no, they had some minor things that they would discuss with Ms. Ellen. Commissioner Holt verified with Mr. Dixon that they would get a report on that.

Commissioner Hinson stated normally, when they have this public hearing meeting, they have a statement from the Planning and Zoning. Ms. Andrews mentioned page 8 and 9.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

GENERAL BUSINESS

7. Presentation for Figgers Communication – Settlement Discussion

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. Chair NeSmith stated they have a presentation from their Legal Counsel regarding matters that took place today.

Attorney Zach appeared before the Board to discuss the settlement of the case between Figgers Communication and the Board. He stated they held a mediation today at the order of the court. He stated the mediation was a confidential proceeding. They did have the opportunity to present them with the result of the mediation. He stated they agreed on a resolution of \$390,000 which would entirely resolve the case. Attorney Zach recommended to the Board that they accept \$390,000 to resolve the matter.

Commissioner Green asked about the attorney fees. Attorney Zach stated the settlement amount was a global settlement, meaning that at the conclusion of the amount, there would be no payment for attorney's fees to them moving forward.

Commissioner Holt told Attorney Zach to explain number 3 on the mediation agreement, Plaintiff shall dismiss this action with prejudice. Attorney Zach stated the dismissal of prejudice means that following the payment of the settlement amount, the Plaintiff would dismiss the lawsuit and prejudice means they could never bring it again. It would end the lawsuit forever.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1, APPROVE THE SETTLEMENT, AND CHAIR NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS SETTLEMENT AMOUNT. COMMISSIONER HOLT OPPOSED.

7A. Approval to Award contract for Bid No. 23-03 Library Technical Services Support

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. This agenda item seeks Board approval to award Bid No. 23-03 to Mr. Paul Clark, MLS in the amount of \$48 per hour at 15 hours a month.

Chair NeSmith stepped out at 7:55 p.m.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

8. Approval of Agreement with Calvin, Giordano and Associates, Inc. (CGA) to purchase Gov-Easy Code Enforcement Software

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. This agenda item seeks approval of services agreement between Calvin, Giordano, and Associates, Inc. and Gadsden County to purchase Gov-Easy Code Enforcement Software.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

8A. Approval of Florida Department of Law Enforcement Salary Assistance Grant for Fiscally Constrained Counties Grant

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. This agenda item seeks approval of Florida Department of Law Enforcement Salary Assistance Grant for fiscally constrained counties.

COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

8B. Approval of the Letter of Intent to Renew the Employee Agreement for the Gadsden County Administrator

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item.

Attorney McKinney-Williams stated on August 8th, the Board directed the County Attorney to prepare an agenda item. This item does is for intent to renew the agreement.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

Chair NeSmith returned at 7:58 pm.

8C. Approval of South Adams Street Sidewalk Agreement

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item.

Commissioner Hinson asked Mr. Dixon to expand on this item. Mr. Dixon stated this was a sidewalk that runs from MLK to Clark Street and down Adams Street. There would be a new sidewalk all the way up to MLK in the amount of \$630,000.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

Clerk of Court

9. Updates

(Nicholas Thomas, Clerk)

County Administrator

10. Updates

Mr. Dixon stated they had a grand opening ceremony in Chattahoochee. He stated in the next few days they will be receiving documentation from him for their input.

Commissioner Hinson asked about a report for Neighborhood Health. Mr. Dixon stated the Attorney was reaching out to the managers at Neighborhood Health.

County Attorney

11. Updates

Discussion Items by Commissioners

Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2

Commissioner Simpkins asked if they had a timeline on when the salary study will be completed for the other employees. Mr. Dixon stated they were about 3 weeks in and they had about 2 more weeks of work. Commissioner Simpkins mentioned the FRDAP Grant deadline was August 31. She asked if

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they have put in applications for that. Ms. Daniels stated they have no applications right now. She stated they just got awarded a recent one, Saint Johns for \$50,000. Commissioner Simpkins stated she would be very upset if they did not get an application in by August 31 for a FRDAP Grant. She asked if they have closed the ones that needed to be closed so that they would qualify to apply for two. Mr. Dixon stated they have closed all their Grants. He stated they have one awarded so they were only qualified for one grant. Commissioner Simpkins stated that was awarded in the last fiscal year. So, they qualify for two. Allen Meeks appeared before the Board and stated that was correct. He stated the last two have been reimbursed. Commissioner Simpkins stated she wanted to make sure that they have a Grant proposal in by August 31. Mr. Dixon stated it was not a problem applying for two \$50,000 Grants. He stated they wanted to apply for one of the larger Grants.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned Attapulgus Highway and asked what was the update. Curtis Young appeared before the Board and stated they submitted paperwork back to FDOT. He stated they would not be doing the entire road.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned Ordinance as it relates to contracts. Commissioner Simpkins stated they need to make sure they are letting their constituents know exactly how the 77 million dollars were appropriated. She stated for them to put a layout on their website showing where the 77 million dollars are being allocated. Commissioner Simpkins mentioned a Town Hall Meeting with Senator Simon and Representative Franklin on August 24 at 6 p.m. at the Simon Scott Senior Citizen Center.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned that on August 15, it showed they will be having training for the website. She was hoping this will be in full operation the next time they meet. Commissioner Simpkins asked how to have forms uploaded that way their citizens could fill out forms that way.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she had requested signs some months back for the Dogtown area. She asked where they were with those yard signs and if she could get them for that area. Ms. Steele stated that Chief Hood informed that they did not have the funds for those signs.

Commissioner Brenda A. Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt mentioned the Gadsden County Treasure Hunt that she is a member of. She stated they will be having an event April of next year. She stated they were looking for all kinds of items like scrub boards, wash pots, etc.

Commissioner Holt stated she liked the priority projects. She stated they should have a section on the website for projects.

Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5

Commissioner Green wanted to make a motion for retired Pastor Sterling Barkley Sr.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS REQUEST.

Commissioner Green asked for a motion for retired Commissioner Clarence Bryant Sr.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY CHAIR NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS REQUEST.

Commissioner Green wanted to make a proclamation for Event Community Promoter Chris Holt.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS PROCLAMATION REQUEST.

Commissioner Green mentioned an issue with internal homelessness. He stated a lot of people are having to stay with other people. He mentioned maybe having some type of emergency housing program to assist people. He stated they need some type of dialogue on how they could get some funding.

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Commissioner Green asked what process did they have in place as it related to the maintenance of the ditches and drainage. Curtis Young appeared before the Board and stated in regards to the drainage issue, they normally send the maintenance crews around. Commissioner Green stated some of the drainages have not been attended to in a very long time.

Commissioner Green mentioned Ordinance as it related to how many houses you could put here, what you can do with that, etc. and stated it was time to pull those forward to have those discussions because he has been getting about 4 or 5 different situations where people are being told no based upon what they have in place.

Commissioner Green stated they have a major wild pig situation in this County. He stated it was becoming horrifying to residents and they were afraid to go outside. He stated there were traps set up and about 18 pigs were captured. He wanted an update on how they were trying to resolve this. Mr. Dixon stated he believed tomorrow they will have a meeting on this. He stated it would require a large effort to get many at a time in large traps. He stated they were looking to work all together. USDA had said that they did not want to deal with any small trappers. Allen Meeks appeared before the Board and stated he wanted to point out that they were considered feral or wild and they were brought in in the 1500s when the Spaniards came over. He stated there were over 30 states having this problem. Commissioner Green asked how did they find where they are. Allen Meeks stated complaints are a good start.

Commissioner Eric F. Hinson, District 1

Commissioner Hinson mentioned fire hydrants. He stated they needed to have a serious meeting about this and look for a solution. Commissioner Hinson mentioned local participation and stated they needed to get more women and minorities involved.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned AC unit for citizens and stated it needed to be replaced. He stated it read repairs and maintenance, but not replacements. He stated they needed to think about this because those are their citizens. He stated they needed to consider paying for that AC unit since it is theirs.

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Commissioner Hinson mentioned Community Resource Fair and they served close to 700 families that were there. He stated they gave thousands of toiletries out. Commissioner Hinson stated they needed a workshop on Fire Department and local participation.

Commissioner Hinson wanted to make a motion to give the County Administrator permission to purchase an AC unit that goes into their building so the citizens could use the health facility in Havana.

Commissioner Holt stated they needed to go by the contract. She stated the Contract was written the way it was so that the organization could save up the money over the years.

Commissioner Green stated he needed to see some numbers and a little more information on this. He would like an agenda item for this and they needed to have more discussion to know the details.

Chair NeSmith stated he cannot support this due to lack of information. He stated there needed to be a process and more research done.

Commissioner Hinson wanted to withdraw his motion. He stated they have to replace the AC unit in 2 months anyway, so, he would like to find ways to direct the County Administrator to find out the cost for replacing an AC unit.

Commissioner Hinson withdrew his motion from earlier and Commissioner Simpkins withdrew her second. Mr. Dixon stated there were multiple units and issues at play.

Commissioner Hinson made a motion for the Board to give direction to the County Administrator for the cost analysis of an AC unit.

Commissioner Holt stated there should be correspondence from them. She stated she was in favor of doing research. She stated they needed to look at the entire lease agreement.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO HAVE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR GIVE THEM A COST ANALYSIS FOR AN AC UNIT AND COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HOLT AND CHAIR NESMITH OPPOSED.

Chairman Kimblin E. Nesmith, J.D., District 3

Chair NeSmith thanked the Board for allowing today's meeting to happen. He also thanked the Commissioners for attending the North Florida Rural Health groundbreaking today.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned that he will be in Gadsden County's Hall of Fame.

Commissioner Holt stated she wanted to make sure that people realize that just because they were having intense discussions on certain departments did not mean that they were attacking the individuals in that department.

Chair NeSmith wanted to congratulate Chattahoochee Elementary School Principal Floyd. He thanked him for growing that school.

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Motion to Adjourn

WITH NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 9:31 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk