

**AT A FINAL BUDGET HEARING OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 AT 5:01
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
 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 Budget Public Hearing to order at 5:06 pm, asked Mr. Farr to give the Invocation and the Chair then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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@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.

Chair NeSmith read the above statement aloud.

Commissioner Hinson stepped out 5:09 pm

Commissioner Hinson returned at 5:09 pm.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Introduction of Proposed Final FY 23/24 Aggregate Millage Rate

Chair NeSmith said this was the second of two required Public Hearings on the Gadsden County 2023-2024 fiscal budget and millage rate. He said the proposed final aggregate millage rate is 9.2500, which is 17.69% more than the aggregate rolled-back millage rate of 7.857 mills.

2. Introduction of Proposed Final FY 23/24 Budget

Mr. Dixon said the proposed final County-wide millage rate is 9.2500 mills, which is 17.69% more than the County-wide rolled-back millage rate of 7.8597 mills. He said at this time, the public was allowed to speak.

3. Questions from the Public

Cathy Farr, 564 Middle Creek Road, Quincy, FL

Mrs. Farr appeared before the Board to ask that the millage rate not be increased for Gadsden County. She asked that the Commissioners actually reduce the millage rate. She looked at the budget on-line and saw that the County employees were budgeted to receive a \$3,000 bonus and there were 700+ employees.

Bill Farr, 564 Middle Creek Road, Quincy, FL

Mr. Farr appeared before the Board and said he was reiterating what Cathy had said earlier. He also asked that the millage rate be reduced, at least to 9.0.

Allen Suber, 1002 West Franklin Street, Quincy, FL

Mr. Suber appeared before the Board and thanked them for the work they do and asked they do not raise the millage rate for the County. He said the property owners would be the bearers of the taxes.

4. Chairman Introduces Motion for:

• **Approval of Final FY 2023-24 Millage Rate**

Chair NeSmith said Florida Statutes requires the Board to address the millage rate before addressing each budget. The Board must vote on each millage rate and budget separately and he would not entertain a motion for the millage rate.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MILLAGE RATE AT 9.2500 AND MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF SECOND.

Commissioner Green said he wanted to make sure they were listening to their constituents. He did not think they were at the right time for an increase.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO MAINTAIN THE MILLAGE RATE AT 9.0000 AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Commissioner Holt addressed the bonus given to the employees and said pay scale was below where it should have been and they could not afford to give a raise every year and was the reason for the bonus.

Commissioner Green also addressed the bonus, it will not be a continuing bonus and the employees were on a lower pay scale.

• **Approval for Final FY 2023-24 Budget**

Chair NeSmith said they needed a motion on the adoption of the final fiscal year 2023/2024 County-Wide Budget.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH.
CHAIR NESMITH ANNOUNCED THE FLOOR WAS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION.**

Commissioner Hinson asked where Mrs. Farr where she saw on-line the bonus that was for the employees.

Mr. Dixon said a bonus was given to all County employees and to the sheriff's Department from ARPA money.

Commissioner Green said they were approving this for a balanced budget but they would be able to move money in the budget but would not be able to go over the budget.

Commissioner Hinson asked about the money for Seniors.

**CHAIR NESMITH CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 TO APPROVE.
COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

MOTION TO ADJOURN

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED
THE PUBLIC HEARING ADJOURNED AT 5:32 PM.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk