

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON FEBRUARY 20, 2024 AT 6:00
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: Ronterious Green, Chairman, District 5
Alonzetta Simpkins, Vice-Chair, District 2
Eric Hinson, District 1
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3
Brenda Holt, District 4
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Adriana Quijada, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Green called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Chair Green provided Invocation. Ms. Kayla led into the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Dixon stated he had an amendment to add item 6a and items 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e.

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

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES

CONSENT

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH THE
EXCEPTION OF ITEM 4,5, AND 6 BEING PULLED FOR DISCUSSION. COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE
THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.**

Commissioner Simpkins requested item 4 and Commissioner NeSmith requested item 6 to be pulled for discussion. Commissioner Hinson requested item 5.

1. Ratification Memo

2. BOCC Meeting/ Workshop Minutes

- January 23, 2024 Public Hearing

3. Approval of the Affordable Housing Committee Housing Incentives and CDBG Application Selection

~~4. Approval of Task Order with AE Engineering, Inc. for Park Master Plan~~
Pulled for discussion.

~~5. Approval of Task Order with ALDAY Howell Engineering, Inc. for Striping Project~~
Pulled for discussion.

6. Approval of Change Order #1 for CR 65 Attapulcus Highway

~~6a. Approval for Staff to Submit an Application to the Florida Department of Commerce, Capital Projects Digital Connectivity Technology Program (DCTP)~~
Pulled for discussion.

ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

4. Approval of Task Order with AE Engineering, Inc. for Park Master Plan

Commissioner Simpkins stated in the task order it has inventory of facilities, equipment, and thought some of these things Staff should be able to do. Mr. Dixon stated the inventory they might do is not the same inventory that the engineers are doing. Once they do their inventory, they are delivering a park master plan. They are also developing opportunities that they might have in the future to write grants for these particular parks.

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

5. Approval of Task Order with ALDAY Howell Engineering, Inc. for Striping Project

Commissioner Hinson asked the County Administrator to give a brief synopsis on this item. Mr. Dixon stated they seek to hire engineers to go through and determine the roads listed in the inventory and what level of striping they need.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the County Administrator if there were any additional resources for striping. Mr. Dixon stated he was not aware of dollars that they were not attacking.

Commissioner Hinson asked how much money did they have in sales tax for this project; maybe need a workshop on this. Mr. Dixon stated he would get those numbers to him.

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

6a. Approval for Staff to Submit an Application to the Florida Department of Commerce, Capital Projects Digital Connectivity Technology Program (DCTP)

Mr. Dixon presented the above item.

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

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

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.org 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.

Chair Green read aloud the above statement.

Dr. Tracey Stallworth, 770 Selman Road

Dr. Stallworth mentioned Pastor Lewis was killed at an illegal establishment in Havana. He was asking to create an Ordinance regarding the illegal internet cafes.

Kimberly Butler, 105 Simmons Attapulcus, GA

Kimberly Butler appeared before the Board. She stated her husband Rev. Lewis gave his life up for someone else. She stated these cafes have got to go. She stated her co-worker was robbed and was told not to call police due to the establishment being illegal. She would hate to see someone else lose their life.

Commissioner Holt thanked her for her comments. She stated she had this discussion and felt like they should write an Ordinance where they do not allow the internet cafes in the County.

Marshelle Martin, 210 Prescott Place

Ms. Martin stated she was the cousin-in-law of Pastor Lewis. She stated there has been many robberies in the area due to the same cafes being around.

Commissioner Holt stated they need an Ordinance to state internet cafes were not allowed in the County. The County Attorney stated the state already declared internet cafes illegal. Mr. Dixon mentioned an ordinance that allows the sheriff to enforce the state portion of the Ordinance. It is a state statute.

The County Attorney stated the Sheriff is trusted with enforcing the law and he was not sure the County could pass an ordinance that would order a separate constitutional officer to undertake much of anything. They are not a law enforcement entity.

Commissioner Hinson stated if something was illegal, they were not the enforcers. He stated he has been saying for years that they needed to do something about these internet cafes. It was not a county commission issue. By putting an ordinance, they were putting Code Enforcement at risk. If something illegal was taking place, you call the Sheriff's Department not the Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Holt asked the County Attorney to look at drafting an Ordinance that was compatible with other towns, cities, counties that are saying that these things are illegal. Mr. Knowles stated he did look at other counties and they all addressed it from a land development perspective. He stated that Commissioner Hinson had a good point in that it puts them in legal limbo. If the Board wanted to address this, then they could present an ordinance and he would work with growth management to address it.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

GENERAL BUSINESS

7. Approval of Resolution 2024-003 Grant Budget Amendment for FY 2024

Mr. Dixon presented above.

Ms. Daniels stated there was a correction to the amendments. Number 2024-045 needed to be stricken and included in 2024-010. She mentioned that budget amendment 2024-003 was the Sheriff Deputy salary assistance grant and budget amendment 2024-010 was for the EMS Facility grant. Ms. Daniels also clarified that budget amendment 2024-033 was for the Stevens School grant.

Commissioner Hinson asked the County Administrator to expand on budget amendment 2024-014 Shelter Retrofit program. Mr. Dixon stated that was the grant at the hospital. They were retrofitting it to hold special needs like hurricanes, etc.

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

8. Approval of 180-Day Interlocal Fire and Rescue Service Agreement Extension Between Gadsden County and the Town of Havana

Mr. Dixon presented the above item.

Commissioner Hinson asked if anything was changed. The County Attorney stated they were only approving the extension 180 days retroactive to the end of the prior contract which would give them 2 and a half months left.

Commissioner Holt asked about the difference between the two documents. Mr. Knowles stated there was no substantial difference. Commissioner Holt stated if there was nothing substantial about the difference in the two, then you do not normally have your contractor re-write your contract.

Commissioner Simpkins stated they did not pass this in the last meeting because they needed time to read the differences she thought. She stated there was no difference as it related to services, just the wording.

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

9. Approval of Fire Department's Interlocal Fire and Rescue Service Agreements

Mr. Dixon stated he had conversations with the Town of Greensboro, City of Chattahoochee, City of Gretna, and the City of Midway. They all asked that they be removed from the group position and that their contracts be individually approved based on the contract that the county had submitted.

The County Attorney stated they did speak with their insurance agent John Pat Thomas. They have in writing that the volunteers are covered both under their workers' comp.

COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 9 AND COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

9a. Approval of Town of Greensboro Interlocal Fire and Rescue Service Agreement

COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 9A AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

9b. Approval of City of Chattahoochee Interlocal Fire and Rescue Service Agreement

COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 9B AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

9c. Approval of City of Gretna Interlocal Fire and Rescue Service Agreement

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 9C AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

9d. Approval of City of Midway Interlocal Fire and Rescue Service Agreement

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 9D AND CHAIR GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

9e. Approval of Volunteer Fire Departments Interlocal Fire and Rescue Service Agreement

COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 9E AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

10. Approval to Create a Position for a County Health Coordinator

Mr. Dixon presented the above item.

Commissioner Hinson stated they should have a budget workshop first. Commissioner Holt asked if there was a line item for this and Mr. Dixon stated not at this time.

Chair Green asked about the salary and Mr. Dixon stated he was not sure. Chair Green asked to table this.

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

Clerk of Court

No Updates.

County Administrator

Mr. Dixon stated it was Black History Month. They have a Parade and Gala Saturday. He also mentioned that Justin Stiell would be leaving to pursue other opportunities.

Mr. Dixon introduced the new HR Director, Lisa Burroughs.

County Attorney

Mr. Knowles mentioned that the redistricting lawsuit against the Board had been stayed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Eric F. Hinson, District 1

Commissioner Hinson stated he met with someone on a project for the County. He thanked Congressman Lawson. He wanted to tell the Commissioners that he loved them.

Commissioner Kimblin E. NeSmith, J.D., District 3

Commissioner NeSmith asked where they were with the legal services contracts. Mr. Dixon stated the RFP will be ready in a day or two.

COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO ENTER A MONTH-TO-MONTH CONTRACT WITH THEIR EXISTING LEGAL SERVICES FIRM UNTIL THEY ARE ABLE TO DETERMINE WHAT ISSUES THEY WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND WITH DISCUSSION. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Commissioner Holt asked the County Administrator if he looked at other contracts and Mr. Dixon stated yes, he will send recommendations.

Chair Green asked for the recommendations be sent as soon as the County Administrator gets it and Mr. Dixon stated yes.

COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO RECOGNIZE COMMISSIONER DIANNE WILLIAMS-COX AND CHAIR GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS MOTION.

COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO RECOGNIZE CURTIS RICHARDSON AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS MOTION.

Commissioner NeSmith congratulated Willie Simmons on the award for National Coach of the Year.

Commissioner NeSmith mentioned Stevens School. Mr. Stiell appeared before the Board and stated they received word from Florida Commerce that they had approved the bid documents. He stated they were going to meet with the budget department tomorrow on the RFP so they could get that out as soon as possible. It would be 21 days from that point, then that will come back to the Board for the approval of a contractor.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that they need a plaque with all districts that goes back to all the commissioners in the history of Gadsden County.

Commissioner Brenda A. Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt mentioned that last week, she testified before the senate subcommittee on the term limits for commissioners. She stated it was a concern because if the Board's turn over quickly, they were not going to have any one that know the laws and a lot of those ordinances.

Commissioner Holt wanted the County Administrator to find out the cost of funding a full-time fire station and bring it back to the Board.

Commissioner Holt stated she would like for the County Attorney to bring back an ordinance regarding the internet cafes.

Vice Chair Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2

Commissioner Simpkins stated on February 29 at 6 p.m., she will be hosting a community meeting to discuss parks.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned lighting and asked where they were with that. Mr. Dixon stated they have not started on it yet.

Commissioner Simpkins asked about the timeline on the salary schedule. Mr. Dixon stated he spent most of the day with the HR Director going over the salary survey.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she saw a post on Facebook and noticed Commissioner Holt at the School Board meeting and they were discussing the county partnering with the School Board as it related to land and that the Board supported it. Commissioner Simpkins stated she did not remember that coming before the Board. She stated she did not know anything about anything taking place at the School Board meeting. Chair Green stated he also had those same concerns and wanted to make it known that he was not happy about what he saw because nothing had officially come across the Board. He also wanted an explanation on this because he was very livid.

Mr. Dixon stated they have been talking to members of the School Board at the request of the Board for nine months about school and school locations. They are conversations and not intended to hold this body to anything. He stated they simply committed to was to help the School Board look for alternatives to their situation. They were out looking for a location for the Boys and Girls Club. They happened to run up on a landowner who was very interested in what they were doing. Mr. Dixon apologized and stated it should not have been interpreted as anything except them looking at this opportunity.

Commissioner Simpkins ended with a question:

“If we remain on the spending trajectory that we’re on, where will we be five years from now?”

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the Summer Youth Program. Mr. Dixon stated as soon as they were out of February, they would be devoting a lot more resources to the development of that program.

Chair Ronterious Green, District 5

Chair Green asked Mr. Young to drive by the public library in Quincy and check the lighting. The direction of the lighting was not angled in the best positions.

Chair Green asked about Serenity Lane. Mr. Young stated he spoke with someone out there and was waiting for that person to pick up the package.

Chair Green asked Mr. Young about Highbridge and Joe Adams Road. He asked about putting a 4 way stop sign because of accidents. Mr. Dixon stated it has to be led up to, because the traffic was so fast.

CHAIR GREEN MADE A MOTION FOR A PROCLAMATION FOR REGINALD WASHINGTON CELEBRATING 30 YEARS AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND WITH DISCUSSION. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS MOTION.

Commissioner NeSmith asked to make sure these were in plaques for history purposes. Chair Green stated they would need more discussion on that.

Dr. Stallworth asked about the workshop for internet cafés. Chair Green stated they would not know the date yet for the workshop.

Chair Green provided a green light moment:

“It’s never too late to be what you might have been.”

Motion to Adjourn

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR GREEN DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:21 PM.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

**Ronterious Green, Chair
Board of County Commissioners**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk